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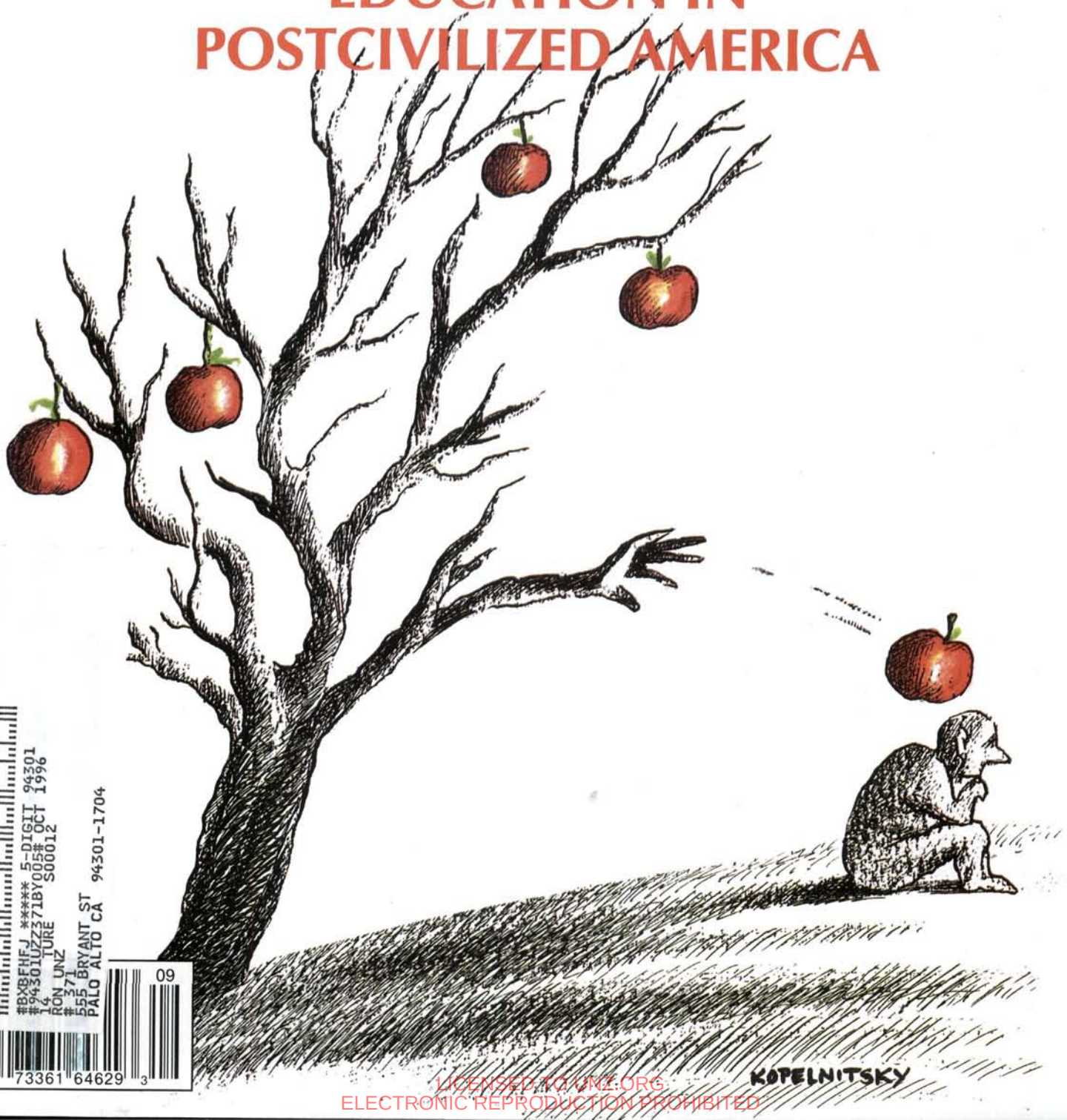

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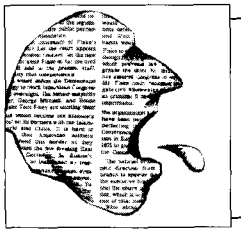

PERSPECTIVE

On Liberal Education 12
by Thomas Fleming

The education of liberals.

VIEWS

To Hell With Culture by John Lukacs 16
The importance of education to civilization, not culture.

Technovandals and the Future of Libraries 20
by Michael Gorman
The war against the book.

All Such Filthy Cheats by Theodore Pappas 23
The nagging problem of plagiarism.

The Politics of Education and the Metaphysics of Emptiness 26
by Stephen A. Erickson
Why excellence must go.

OPINIONS

Go Figure by Arnold Beichman 29
Jonathan Aitken: *Nixon: A Life.*
Assessing a man of contradictions.

REVIEWS

Mark E. Neely, Jr.'s *The Last Best Hope of Earth: Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America* is a flat portrayal of a perplexing figure, writes **Brenan R. Nierman** 31
◆ **Gerald Russello** surveys *Conservative, American & Jewish: I Wouldn't Have It Any Other Way* by Jacob Neusner, *A Jewish Conservative Looks at Pagan America* by Don Feder, and *I Shot an Elephant in My Pajamas: The Morrie Ryskind Story* by Morrie Ryskind and John H. Roberts ◆ **Christine Haynes** recommends John Lukacs's *Destinations Past: Traveling through History with John Lukacs* ◆ Joseph Lanza confuses bad taste with good in *Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy-Listening, and Other Moodsong*, says **J.O. Tate** ◆

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Winthrop University: On Campus With the National AIDS Quilt 36
by Luther M. Boggs, Jr.

Letter From Colorado: Back to Basics 37
by Edward L. Lederman

Letter From Belize: Caribbean Vacation 39
by Ray Lowry

Letter From the Lower Right: The Honorable Gentleman From New York 42
by John Shelton Reed

VITAL SIGNS

Hire Education: Technology as Reform 44
by Mary Pride

The Perils of Politically Incorrect Research 46
by John Dombrowski

New Covenant High School, 2040 47
by Robert Westmoreland

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 5

PRINCIPALITIES & POWERS 9
De-Americanization
by Samuel Francis

THE HUNDREDTH MERIDIAN 49
View From a Campfire
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

POETRY
History Is Not Finished 28
by Peter Russell

Landing 45
by Gloria Whelan

ON THE COVER

Cover drawing by Igor Kopelnitsky.

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EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

MANAGING EDITOR
Theodore Pappas

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Christine Haynes

ART DIRECTOR
Anna Mycek-Wodecki

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Harold O.J. Brown, Katherine Dalton, Samuel Francis, George Garrett, E. Christian Kopff, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Bill Kauffman, Jacob Neusner, John Shelton Reed, Momcilo Selic

EDITORIAL SECRETARY
Leann Dobbs

PUBLISHER
Allan C. Carlson

PUBLICATION DIRECTOR
Guy C. Reffett

COMPOSITION MANAGER
Anita Fedora

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Rochelle Frank

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On Segregation and Education

I enjoyed Samuel Francis's lucid analysis of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education* ("Forty Years After," May 1994), but I take exception to his argument that "the only feasible moral defense of the *Brown* decision today is not that it replaced force with freedom, but that it replaced one kind of free but morally inferior conduct (segregation) with unfree but morally superior conduct (integration)."

This argument can be dismissed out of hand for the same reason cited by Mr. Francis in the very next sentence: because such a defense is "preposterous." It relies upon the fallacious proposition that coerced racial integration or equality of outcome (substitute any civil rights catch phrase) is a more morally attractive condition than voluntary racial segregation or equality of opportunity, regardless of the immorality of the means necessary for the realization of such a condition. Even if one were to cast the decision in the most elementary moral framework by asking whether the rule will do more good than harm, or whether it will serve to help more people than it portends to injure, moral philosophy of any school is insufficient to demonstrate that *Brown* is itself moral, let alone more acceptable than its converse—the freedom to dissociate. Considering he concludes correctly that there is no reasonable defense of the *Brown* decision today, I am inclined to wonder what prompted Mr. Francis to mention such a defense in the first place, least of all in possession of the modifier "feasible."

—Jeffrey M. Kane
Gahanna, OH

Dr. Francis Replies:

After a good deal of verbosity, Mr. Kane at length uncovers the meaning of what I said in the first place—a feasible defense (i.e., a defense capable of being done, "do-able," as we say in Washington) may also be a preposterous defense. I did not say a "logically valid," "morally compelling," or "factually sound" defense, but a "feasible" defense. I know of no other word (except perhaps "possible," which is too broad for my meaning) to convey what I wanted to convey, which Mr. Kane and most everyone else understood anyhow. Since I rejected this "feasible defense" as "preposterous" in the next sentence and offered the same reasoning for this rejection that Mr. Kane offers, and since Mr. Kane acknowledges that I rejected it for that reason, I cannot understand why he bothered to write a letter at all, or for that matter why I am bothering to respond to it.

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FOUR YEARS AT HARVARD have made me much thicker-skinned than I used to be. To be sure, it was more than a little unsettling when my freshman dormitory held a mandatory sensitivity session at which each student was forced to say: "Hello, my name is . . . , and I'm gay." But after seeing Angela Davis welcomed and feted by the John F. Kennedy School of Government and Spike Lee given a multiyear professorship to teach a course on "Contemporary African-American Cinema," I had long since become desensitized to the antics of the Harvard left. I was therefore prepared for just about anything at the recent commencement exercises, which provided a fitting conclusion to an often bizarre college career.

The baccalaureate service, a Harvard tradition dating back to 1642, opened with selections from the sacred texts of all the major religions. A representative of each religion ascended in his turn, read several lines, and was seated, giving the ceremony the feel more of a theological Epcot Center than of a solemn religious service. Some organizers no doubt thought this broad representation would add to the religious significance of the occasion, but its effect was just the opposite. J.F. Stephen was correct to observe that "when religious differences come to be and are regarded as mere differences of opinion, it is because the controversy is really decided in the skeptical sense, though people may not like to acknowledge it formally."

Efforts to accommodate the politically correct crowd actually became amusing. Whenever one of the speakers mentioned God, for example, he would hastily add: "er, by whatever name you may invoke him." One woman broke the monotony by closing a prayer with "in Jesus' name, Amen"—no doubt the last time she'll be heard from at Harvard.

The predictable result of this was to reduce the religious content of the service to a decidedly uninspiring deism—the lowest common denominator of the religions represented. All we could agree on was the existence of a Prime Mover, out there somewhere. It was therefore funny when Radcliffe College President Linda S. Wilson reminded us that diversity had been our strength over the past four years. Diversity would prove to be South Africa's strength as well, she assured us, as the heretofore frustrated potential for a "prosperous" and "stable" South Africa would finally be realized under the leadership of Nelson Mandela.

Apart from the occasional scholar or scientist, the honorary degree recipients were p.c. to a person, though none more so than retiring Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun. Blackmun, we were told, concerned himself much more with the "real people" involved in his decisions than with legal formalities (e.g., that antiquated document from America's horse-and-buggy days). I remained seated as the entire assembly, led by cheering law school graduates, gave Blackmun a standing ovation for his efforts on behalf of the oppressed.

That afternoon, Vice President Al Gore delivered the Commencement Address—a lengthy harangue on the need for "faith in government." Cynicism, defined by the Vice President as a lack of appreciation of the central state as a force for good, is the bane of democratic government. Gore even tried to blame the crime problem on cynicism. Cynics, you see, are crippling federal efforts to find a solution. Imagine that: while the police stood by and did nothing as mobs terrorized Los Angeles, Crown Heights, and Atlanta, the masses remained skeptical of solutions that involve taking their guns away from them. The rest of the speech was distinctly forgettable, though I do recall rolling my eyes quite a bit.

On that note, the ceremony, and with it my undergraduate career, came to a close. I will, of course, always look fondly on my years at Harvard. But part of me can't help agreeing with John Dos Passos, that until most of Harvard is "blown up and its site filled with salt, no good will come out of Cambridge."

—*Thomas E. Woods, Jr.*

STANFORD is adding to its fame as a site of cultural conflict. When a disturbance broke out during the showing on campus last May of a short film about grape pickers and the perils of insecticide, local print media played up the claim that viewers had chanted "Beaners Go Home" during the ten-minute film. In fact, the 1,700-seat auditorium was filled with chanting, but it was started by a group of 20 Hispanics who forcibly took a cluster of seats in the back near where I was sitting. They physically moved a young Chinese woman out of the seats they chose to occupy as a group.

As the lights dimmed, they started chanting, "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Anglo Gringo, You Got To Go." They repeated this loudly four times. The chant refers to radical Hispanic belief that California needs to be cleansed of English speakers (black, white, Asian, and others) so that the Spanish language is completely dominant. Then the state will be renamed "Aztlan" and will be permanently Hispanic in population.

This chant annoyed some of those in attendance, and two black male students and a Japanese-American female student commenced the counter chant "Beaners Go Home," which was joined in by about 100 students. Local print media, in particular, reported the counter chant and ignored the initial chant of hostility toward English speakers.

Radical Hispanics are unchastised at Stanford and retail the most unpalatable doctrines. Their rhetoric is full of talk about "blood" and "soil" and the need to reclaim California, ignoring the fact that the Mexicans stole California from the Spanish and then controlled it for only about 20 years, failing to develop its industry, agriculture, or commerce. Radical Hispanics at Stanford prefer the label "Chicano" and talk about "Chicanismo" as the body of ideas governing their thinking and political activities. Several radical Hispanic groups are chartered and approved by Stanford's student government and receive university funds for their activities.

Many students privately refer to the speech of the radical Hispanics as "Brown Racism," inasmuch as it promotes the division of society into several groups, one such group to be "Chicanos" who are descendants of Mexican immigrants into the United States. "Chicano" literature and speeches openly claim this land for their culture and for their people and demand a kind of ethnic cleansing of blacks, whites, and Asian-Americans who speak English or who uphold Amer-

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ican culture.

"Brown anti-Semitism," which a few officers of Hispanic clubs and societies on campus proclaim, consists of a cluster of ideas about Jews in Mexico and in America. One of the ideas advocated is that the president of Mexico is a Jew, which explains his heartlessness toward the poor and unempowered peasants in Mexico. Another notion is that all Mexican banks are owned by Jews and that this explains their unwillingness to extend credit and loans to indigenous Mexicans, especially Indians in Mexico. Jews are also portrayed as encouraging the migration of impoverished Mexican peasants to the United States, a kind of Mexican enclosure movement spearheaded by Jewish bankers. And, of course, the prominence of Jewish movie moguls explains the relative lack of success of Hispanic producers, directors, and actors in the American film industry.

In many ways, the chanting of "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Anglo Gringo, You Got To Go" is less troubling than the smaller, but more hateful, expressions against Jewish Americans that are bandied about with no objection from Stanford's administration. If Stanford's Hispanic student population is any indication, we are in for a situation in which a Hispanic Farrakhan could unleash a new wave of hatred toward Jewish Americans on college campuses.

A kind of terror exists at Stanford, such that I do not dare to have my name, major, or dorm printed in any publication. There were five major fist-fights on campus last year between Hispanics or between Hispanics and members of other ethnicities on the issue of Hispanic doctrine and its correct application to campus political and social issues. "Chicanismo" is taken very seriously by Hispanic students and the administration, and it is feared by many students and faculty who tailor their remarks in accordance with that fear.

—Nathan

MILITARY INVOLVEMENT in Haiti is the stuff of nightmares. In comparison, the oil and arms blockade, reinforcements in the Dominican Republic, and sanctions against commercial airline traffic from Port-au-Prince occasion mere despair. President Clinton's prodemocracy broadcasts delivered via helicopter-borne bullhorn and Quebec-trained Haitian police (fresh from human rights seminars) are but passing comic moments. No international intervention can gain for Haiti the lofty prize of democracy; embargos and beachheads thus pointlessly add to misery.

Installation of an elected president (Aristide or any other) will not bring democracy to Haiti, because impoverished countries cannot be governed democratically. When resources fall chronically short of basic needs, rationing becomes inevitable and democratic solutions to distributional problems vanish.

Resource shortages lead to resource grabs. The real choice is between an authoritarian government that distributes resources in line with its own interests and values and no government at all. The authoritarian governments in Haiti and China are improvements over chaos. Even authoritarian governments have some interest in the well-being of the governed, because stability (public passivity) keeps the established elite in power. The United States, attempting to destabilize governments in order to introduce the chimera of democracy into settings where it has no chance, does a disservice to the common people of every country in which it intervenes.

Alexis de Tocqueville observed that the roots of our democracy were planted in the natural wealth of the continent. With fewer than 50 million people, citizens could prosper without taking from fellow Americans (although history shows that many did take and still, of course, do). Democracy has a chance when each man and woman can create wealth from a bounteous nature. But democracy has no chance after nature has been raped—as in Haiti, where a decent living can be had only at the expense of another's livelihood.

Population growth beyond the carrying capacity of the environment is the root cause of resource shortage. Haitian women average six children each. The population in Haiti is growing so fast that it is on track to double in 23 years. Haiti can lift itself from poverty and begin to restore its environment only by reducing the number of children each woman bears—the fertility rate—to two or fewer. Assisting Haiti toward this model goal is a proper subject for debate and policy.

Elsewhere I suggest that helping to create jobs for women is the best strategy for slowing population growth; if women's time has a market value, childrearing carries an opportunity cost. On the other hand, providing large-scale subsidies for Third World "development" and opening the door for the immigration of others' excess population are the worst strategies. Both mislead ordinary people into the false belief that resources are abundant—in their own country or in ours. And when people perceive expanding economic opportunity, they want more children, not fewer.

United States citizens have acquired a sense of limits. Because many Americans fear for their children's future, if not their own, family size has shrunk. Out of prudence, young couples often delay both marriage and the birth of a first child. Americans' self-restraint is nullified, unfortunately, by immigration and the high fertility of new immigrants. Because of immigration, conservative projections show America's population doubling in 64 years, with no stabilization in sight.

Rapid population growth could even jeopardize our democracy. America's resources are not limitless. Known and discoverable oil and natural gas reserves are predicted to last 10 to 13 years. (Overseas oil could see us through another 30 years, but at what price?) Our topsoil disappears 18 times faster than it is replenished with current agricultural practices, and even clean water could become a costly commodity. Will our resources be adequate to support democracy as we approach this crowded future? History should warn us against trying to find out.

Meanwhile, let us institute a time-out on immigration in order to enjoy measured growth. And let us encourage Washington to accept different forms of governance worldwide and to recognize that only strong hands can divide few resources among many people. America cannot afford the naive belief that democracy will flourish apart from a gainfully occupied and prosperous citizenry.

—Virginia Abernethy

STUDENT RADICAL ACTIVITY is alive and well at American universities. Of course, it is difficult to be a radical when so many radical ideas of the 60's and 70's—including feminism, institutionalized egalitarianism, Marxism, messianic environmentalism, race theories,

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deconstructionism, Lacanism, and moral relativism—are ensconced in what passes for higher education today. But student radicals will try, pushing the envelope of acceptability to new levels of extremism.

Last Veteran's Day, for example, a group of about 200 demonstrators, led by out-of-state rabble-rousers, filled the first floor of the administration building at the New York State University campus in Binghamton to express their dissatisfaction with the state university system. Led by Sarah Murphy, who identified herself as a member of the National Women's Rights Organizing Coalition, these protesters said they wanted "total student control" of curriculum decisions and the hiring and firing of faculty members. They also demanded open admission; free tuition; expansion of studies related to blacks, Latinos, women, homosexuals, and Asians; and the firing of all public safety officers on the 65 state university campuses. As one might guess, university officials did not say "no"; they didn't have any comment.

This response, or lack thereof, is precisely what ails higher education. There is an unwillingness to call radical proposals absurd. University presidents hope these ideas will go away, dissipate like smoke billowing in the air, but only on rare occasions are these ideas confronted directly and denounced. Radical students want to run university campuses because they want the mantle of authority—the legitimacy university life can confer—without the attendant responsibility. If universities were egalitarianized then grades would be meaningless as would all evaluation. Anyone could teach. And notions of objectivity and even knowledge would be filtered through the screen of radical sentiments.

If faculty members were hired and fired by students, then only those who say what students want to hear would be hired and only those who violate the radical catechism would be fired. Clearly it is political judgment that counts in such a setting, not scholarly judgment. If standards for admission do not prevail, how does one decide who gains admission? And if standards for graduation do not exist, of what value is a degree? The only valid response to the conditions espoused by the radicals is to give everyone a degree and dispense with the charade of any education. Similarly, if there isn't any tuition for students attending the state university and the financial burden is dispersed among the state's taxpayers, then doesn't it stand to reason that those same taxpayers should have something to say about university requirements, the curriculum, and hiring and firing?

What precisely does it mean to expand the study of blacks, Latinos, women, homosexuals, and Asians? Does it mean that Tom Sowell, Cervantes, Jane Austen, Shakespeare, and Lao-tzu will be required authors? Or does it mean a radical sensibility, a sense of victimization, will be imposed on those students who are members of designated minority groups?

To fire public safety employees is to suggest that public safety either is unimportant or can be sustained in some other way. The number of criminal incidents on state university campuses forecloses on the former explanation, and an alternative to public safety employees like student employees, i.e., radical student employees, raises the specter of the student Red Guard.

Any of the radical student proposals can easily be exposed as illogical. Yet—and here is the rub—administrators fail to do so. They often hide behind the canard that "all" student proposals should receive an adequate hearing. The consequence of this administrative weakness is that radicals keep pushing their agenda in the hope that yesterday's extremes will seem like tomorrow's moderation. The strategy is to raise the ante so that the last hand actually looks reasonable in the context of flowing events. All the initiative in this scenario belongs with the student radicals. The administration either responds to demands, legitimizing them in the process, or says nothing, awakening the obvious suspicion that it is cowardly and unwilling to make waves.

What a college needs is an administration capable of asserting and defending the principles on which the academy rests. Anything less weakens the foundation of a structure already eroded and sets the stage for the thoroughgoing radicalization of higher education.

—Herbert London

STUDENTS are becoming clients at an increasing number of public colleges. Indeed, staff members consider them "caseloads." Programs such as "Economic Opportunity Funds" (EOFs) exist as pork barrels, doling out patronage to middle- and upper-middle-class employees, enforcing racist and sexist personnel policies, and acting as politburos. Administrators and staffers openly display their feelings of superiority toward instructors, as well as an equally aggressive anti-intellectualism. Such programs have introduced a *social work mentality* to colleges that seeks to do away with any concern for academic standards, fairness, or merit. As with social workers in the field, instructors and administrators put off issues interminably—at taxpayer expense—rather than force students to take responsibility for their own success or failure. EOFs and allied programs have institutionalized the ideology of victimhood within a burgeoning college welfare bureaucracy.

As the heart of the college welfare bureaucracy, EOFs claim to help students who are "economically disadvantaged," a code for "black and Hispanic." For 20 years these programs have dispensed money based on skin color and ethnicity, independent of economic circumstance. EOF staffers and administrators have a proprietary interest in their students and freely meddle in their personal and academic affairs. EOF administrators and staffers have been known to use their power to carry out vendettas against professors whose politics they don't like. They simply override student course decisions or encourage complaints by student malcontents.

The unwritten personnel code of EOFs is "no white males need apply." It is simply assumed that upper-middle-class members of affirmative action-protected groups possess magical insights into the needs of poor black and Hispanic kids. The immediate power of EOFs derives from the millions of dollars they control at each school in student aid money and staff salaries. A secondary, and ultimately more substantial, power source inheres in the millions of patronage jobs controlled by the "academic" programs that buttress each school's EOF: English as a Second Language (ESL), "academic foundations" (remedial or basic skills) programs, and peer tutoring centers.

College-level ESL and remedial instruction didn't exist before the 1980's. Now two-year associate degree programs have been bloated into *five-year plans*, while academic quality has declined precipitously. Increasing numbers of students (and not all foreign-born) spend their first two college years exclusively

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in non-credit ESL classes, often after years of "bilingual"—more accurately, nonlingual—education in the public schools. These students do not become literate but rather support an elaborate social structure that has become the biggest (tax) money-maker in the open-admissions college world. ESL programs are notorious for the poor quality of their texts and the blasé attitude of their instructors.

After two years of ESL classes, students go on to at least one additional year of noncredit "basic skills" classes: remedial, or "developmental," reading, writing, and arithmetic. The texts for such classes are based on the premise, decimated by E.D. Hirsch, that thinking can be taught without any facts or ideas and that reading can be taught without literature or vocabulary. If students fail at basic skills, no matter. They will not flunk, but rather obtain additional intensive help from peer (!) tutors in a "skills institute." At the community college level, once students have been certified literate, they go on to two years of "real" credit courses such as "College Survival Skills" and "Critical Thinking." Many sections of courses for credit, such as Sociology 101 and Macroeconomics, are still taught in Spanish.

At least until World War II, a college education was considered a privilege. Recently, it has gone from a privilege to a "right" and now to an "entitlement." It is no longer the education as such that is considered an entitlement, but the *degree*. A college degree—at least where "minority" students are concerned—has attained for many progressives, liberals, and multiculturalists the automatic status of a Social Security card. Considering that such advocates believe reality can be defined away, why not save billions of dollars by simply *redefining* a high school degree as adequate to enter polite society?

The pedagogical side of entitlement ideology is the policy of "social passing." Like ESL and basic skills programs, this practice entered "higher education" via grade schools. The program was originally smuggled into practice under the guise of protecting students' self-esteem. Its proponents argued that holding a failed student back from his peers would hurt his feelings. So everyone was promoted. Thus, the idea of merit—and the self-respect that derives from true accomplishment—was killed off with that of failure.

Practices such as social passing involve a constant lowering of standards, so as to accommodate the worst students. Such policies have ushered in a counterrevolution of sinking expectations: lower classroom standards produce graduates who understand so little in the way of the cultural stock that they will read no books or only the simplest kind. This, in turn, leads publishers to narrow what they will publish and writers to water down the references and allusions in their works.

I see in the college practice of social passing yet another affirmative action-style entitlement program. In a world where, regardless of their members' effort or competence, certain demographic groups must be guaranteed success in order to make up for past injustices, just showing up has become equated with doing the job. At an increasing number of colleges rampant absenteeism has become the only way to flunk classes—unless, that is, a student has a really "good" EOF counselor.

—*Nicholas Stix*

THE *CHESTERTON REVIEW* is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a conference to be held September 14-16 in Toronto. The *Review*, if any of our readers is unfamiliar with it, is unique among literary journals. The focus is on Chesterton, of course, and on his friends (like Belloc) and antagonists (such as Shaw and Wells), but the net is spread wide enough to cover writers who inspired GKC (Cardinal Manning, for example) and those who have been inspired by him (e.g., C.S. Lewis). Chesterton was a complex figure, whose work included a great deal of verse and fiction, newspaper editorials on every topic under the sun, and a good deal of philosophical and theological discussion not only of what's wrong with the world but also of how to make the world right again. Chesterton's social and political views are conveniently labeled "Distributism," since he was a leading figure in the distributist movement, and his sound political wisdom, so relevant to the struggles of our own day, has been made the subject of a number of *Chesterton Review* issues and conferences.

As the darkness descends upon our own time, it is the small groups—the "little platoons" and bands of brothers—that keep the light alive. Perhaps it is because Chesterton is among the least original of important writers that his legacy is so important today. At Chesterton conferences I have run into simple people who have gained a suprising degree of wisdom and shrewdness, simply from reading and rereading GKC, and it is one of the pleasures of such conferences that they are attended by so many really good people whose imaginations are bright and clear and uncorrupted.

All over the world, at this very moment, there are little groups of Chestertonians reading and discussing their favorite author and applying his wisdom to the times they live in. Much of the credit for GKC's flourishing influence must go to Father Ian Boyd and the *Chesterton Review*. Subscribers to the review receive quarterly infusions of lively prose and wholesome wisdom. The subscription price is only $35 U.S. For subscriptions or for information on the conference, write: The *Chesterton Review*, St. Thomas More College, 1437 College Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, S7N 0W6.

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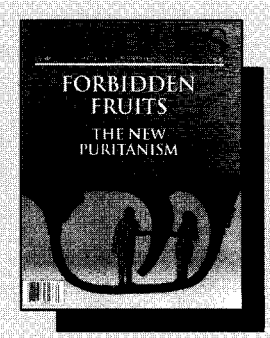

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by Samuel Francis

De-Americanization

Although the summer of 1994 produced no entertainments to rival the fun of last year's *Jurassic Park*, let alone the previous summer's Los Angeles riots, it did yield up the brief but amusing manhunt for O.J. Simpson and the edifying spectacle of the wanted killer of his ex-wife and her pretty young companion cruising up and down the Los Angeles freeway while fleets of squad cars, helicopters, and innumerable sympathizers and admirers sang him to his cell. It was my hope during the nationally televised parade that O.J. would end up being smashed by Rodney King driving at more than 100 miles an hour as the LAPD tagged helplessly along behind each of them, but these things never turn out the way I want, and maybe it's just as well.

Yet even more edifying for the nation's youth than the O.J. melodrama was last summer's arrival of global soccer, or, as the rest of the world insists on calling it, "football," in the form of the "World Cup" matches of June and July. Soccer, of course, along with global free trade, the metric system, hot wok shops, signs in Korean script outside Presbyterian churches, and mass immigration, is one further installment in the ongoing and ever-accelerating de-Americanization of America, and despite the fact that the most prominent American athletes today seem to be characters who beat their ex-wives to death as O.J. is alleged to have done, rape teenage girls like Mike Tyson, contract lethal venereal diseases like Magic Johnson, or conspire to win Olympic gold medals by having their rival's legs crushed with iron bars like Tonya Harding, the sports they play at least have a long history in the United States and in some sense can be said to be an important part of our national popular culture.

But hardly any American thinks much about soccer, watches it or wants to watch it, or plays it after he leaves high school or college. Since soccer attracts fanatical followings in almost all regions of the world outside the United States, its popularization in this country would represent a significant modification of the American character, and neglect of soccer or resistance to its adoption could certainly be construed as a form of xenophobia, if not an actual "hate crime." The massive amount of money spent on its promotion last summer surely was intended to make of soccer a kind of athletic therapy for warped nativists who insist that baseball and real football (O.J.'s kind) were good enough for true Americans like Washington and Nixon and therefore are good enough for them. But the emerging global regime cuts both ways, and if it demands that Saudi Arabians eat cheeseburgers and Chinese peasants ogle Madonna, it also means that Americans must modify their narrow-minded ethnocentrism and open their ears to what Bolivian President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada on the first day of the World Cup matches called the "universal language" of soccer.

Whatever the real meaning of soccer, the de-Americanization of America is a principal theme of Dr. Brent A. Nelson's *America Balkanized*, a monograph just published by the American Immigration Control Foundation of Monterey, Virginia, though Dr. Nelson deals more with the ethnic fragmentation and cultural decomposition of the United States caused by massive immigration and birthrates than with the digestion of the nation in the belly of the New World beast. Dr. Nelson, a Ph.D. in English literature, manages to pack an amazing amount of learning into his monograph's 148 pages and presents an astonishing range of scholarship, reaching from recent sociological and historical studies of the nature of immigration into this country and others to a consideration of the sociobiological implications of allowing different human "subspecies" to occupy the same territory.

A good deal of the book is devoted to considering the prospect of the emergence of ethnic separatism in the United States as a result of the settlement of foreign ethnic and racial fragments within our borders, particularly within what Dr. Nelson, following Joel Garreau, calls "MexAmerica," the Southwestern portion of the United States that is increasingly being shaved off from North American civilization and grafted onto the Latin culture of the south. This process of "counter-assimilation," as Dr. Nelson calls it, is mainly due to the demographic and cultural drift of the region, but it is also deliberately promoted by Hispanic activists and their political leaders. Thus, writes Dr. Nelson:

> Property owners in San Diego's McGonigle Canyon, confronted with illegal entrants squatting on their land, experienced difficulty in getting city authorities to enforce the laws against trespassing. California's Assembly passed a resolution urging the federal government to delay building a ditch along the U.S.-Mexican border because the proposed ditch had aroused protests in Mexico when the governor opened the state's new trade office there. A "Buy American-Buy Texan Bill" passed in the Texas legislature only after Mexico was defined in the bill as American. Also approved was a bill to allow Mexican nationals to pay in-state tuition when they attend five Texas state universities in the border area.

Dr. Nelson also cites articles from *Excelsior*, Mexico's leading newspaper, explicitly advocating that Mexico "recover its own"—i.e., take back the Southwestern territory lost to the United States in the Mexican War—and an *Excelsior* poll of 1986 in which 59 percent of Mexicans said they regard the United States as an "enemy country." The Mexican government itself promotes the irredentist ideology that underlies this attitude. Almost anyone who has traveled or lived in "MexAmerica" and who has more eyes in his head than *Wall Street Journal* editorial writers knows that the region is ceasing to be part of America in any but a purely legal sense, and when the cultural and ethnic transition is complete, the legal transition cannot be far distant.

But the Southwest is not the only part of the United States being de-Americanized by the lethal brew of mass immigration, high immigrant fertility coupled with low native (white) birthrates, and a compulsively suicidal bent among American political leaders on both the right and the left. One of Dr. Nelson's chapters deals with the problem "What Is a

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Nation," a question that in the last year or so has been pondered by the professional pundits of the mainstream American right as well. As immigration has become a major political issue in high-impact states like California and Florida, even mainstream conservatives have tumbled to the issue's importance and have started holding their typically bloodless and inconsequential conferences on the same question.

Dr. Nelson is rather more adept at answering the question than most of the rightish eggheads who are usually permitted to discuss it, however. He surveys the distinguishing features of nationality as several writers since John Jay have articulated them and lists the minimal characteristics of a nation on which they agree. These features are a common ancestry, a contiguous territory, a common language, a common religion, common manners and customs, common political institutions or beliefs, and what may be called a common historic experience, manifested in such events as participation in war and expressed in belief in a common destiny or myth of history.

By most of these standards, Dr. Nelson concludes, the United States is ceasing to be a nation, although throughout its history it has been one, and it is Dr. Nelson's argument that "the fragmenting or dissipation of American national unity, which is revealed in this survey of national characteristics, is traceable to a prior weakening of the unity of the original ethnic core. This is the vital antecedent to nationhood and its abiding sustenance, in all of its cultural, legal, and historical manifestations." Moreover, the "ethnic core" is not "a mysterious thing-in-itself, like the folk-spirit of the Romanticists" but is "definable as a kind of natural phenomenon." Dr. Nelson here cites recent sociobiological studies that argue for the foundation of ethnocentrism in evolutionary biology and then applies them to contemporary ethnic and national conflicts in Eastern Europe and Latin America. He explicitly distinguishes both "nation" and "ethnic core" from "race," since "a race precedes a nation and precedes even the formation of the ethnic core which 'generates' a nation. A race can appear in history in the guise of numerous ethnic groups and nations. There is no one nation which in itself constitutes a race."

What Dr. Nelson is pointing to here are the ethnic foundations of nationality, and he is marshaling some very strong evidence to support this claim. The United States is and has been a nation insofar as its central ethnic core was and remained intact; once that core began to wither, dwindle, and experience challenges, numerical and cultural, from other ethnic groups that have retained more group consciousness, the nation that grew up around the Anglo-European ethnic core itself began to shrivel. The major implication of Dr. Nelson's ethnological concept of nationality is that nations are not merely artificial constructs, as metaphors of "melting pots," "mosaics," and "experiments" would suggest, but are themselves natural phenomena or something like them, subject to laws of cause and effect and the limitations that nature imposes, and the main implication of this concept is that those who control a nation politically cannot do whatever they please without risking destruction of the nation. For one thing, they cannot permit the immigration of millions of people from other cultures and ethnic groups and expect the original nation to survive, and Dr. Nelson's conclusions about the survival of the United States are as bleak as his analysis would suggest.

Not only does mass immigration into the United States promise the continuing de-Americanization of the nation and its eventual physical Balkanization, but there is little prospect of seriously controlling immigration because of the nature of the national political dialogue on the issue. Dr. Nelson sees this dialogue as dominated by neoconservatives and New Leftists, both of whom for different reasons favor continuing large-scale immigration, refuse to countenance any control or limitation of it, and denounce anyone who does oppose it with a variety of epithets that range from the relatively kind "xenophobe" to outright comparisons with Adolf Hitler. Dr. Nelson sees as fundamental to neoconservative support for immigration an unexamined and unwarranted faith in unlimited economic growth.

He is correct that the utopianism of neoconservatism and libertarianism is to blame for their adherents' continuing support of immigration, but he seems to distinguish too sharply their beliefs from those of liberals and the left, which he thinks are driven by a desire for more diversity in the American population. The demand for "diversity" is also present among neoconservatives, who always argue that their nemesis, multiculturalism, is merely the work of alienated Marxist elites and their agents and not the result of ethnic and racial conflict that is the direct legacy of diversity. In direct contradiction of their zest for "diversity," their constant refrain is that immigrants have assimilated, are assimilating, and will continue to assimilate, even though their concept of assimilation is banal and, as Dr. Nelson points out, in some parts of the country immigrants are now beginning to outnumber those to whose norms they are supposed to conform. What is happening there is in fact "reverse assimilation," the adoption by natives of the cultures of the immigrants. Wattenberg, Simon, Jack Kemp, and the rest of the neoconservative cadre

LIBERAL ARTS

FAMILY VALUES

Phoenix police arrested a 19-year-old boy for having sex with a 12-year-old girl in his room at home. The boy, his parents, and the girl's mother all went to jail, reported the *Arizona Republic* last spring, while the girl (who suspected that she was pregnant) ended up in a foster home. Christopher Rubio, 19, told police that he met the girl last fall when she was walking to her sixth-grade classes at a neighborhood elementary school. Rubio and his preteen girlfriend were living together in the home of his parents, both 40-year-old citizens of Mexico. The parents "didn't see anything wrong with the whole situation," said detective Al Maciver. "Christopher's mom said her only problem was trying to get the little girl to get up early and make her son's lunch and iron a shirt for him before he went to work."

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are always boosting the very same diversification of the American people and culture that the left finds so charming, and they do so essentially because their most influential spokesmen never really broke with the ideological left at all.

In the absence of at least a real debate about immigration in place of the happy chatter and name-calling that neoconservatives prefer, there is not going to be any political or legal control of immigration. Even now, when political figures like California's Governor Pete Wilson have broached immigration as an issue, most politicians are trying to appear to do something about it while sedulously avoiding doing anything serious—exactly what they are doing on crime as well. As a result, Dr. Nelson argues, the Balkanization of the United States is virtually unavoidable. He foresees an "overall drift . . . towards the extinction of European civilization in large areas of America, first at a slow but steady rate, but then at a rate steadily accelerating." The political dynamic by which the process will occur is clear enough, as American democracy will soon

have to be supplemented with new concessions and adjustments to keep the elites of other groups more or less acquiescent. Affirmative action, "set-asides" for minority-owned businesses, and affirmative gerrymandering will be pursued as relentlessly as ever and, perhaps, supplemented with systems of weighted voting and multiple voting so that minorities may win greater representation in elective offices. Legislation against "hate crimes" may be supplemented by legislation against "hate speech." . . . The political subjugation of European Americans will become a reality in certain limited areas of the country, mostly in the Southwest and the Southeast. In these areas, European Americans will no longer be able to elect officials above the local level and will be forced to cast their votes for those non-Europeans whom they believe to be most sensitive to their concerns.

The result of the Balkanization of the United States will be "a melange of peoples, an America without Americans, which will be governable only through the adoption of the separatist mechanisms developed in Canada, Switzerland, and Belgium," though whether even these mechanisms will be possible is open to doubt as the ethnic-demographic composition of the country begins to shift to a non-European majority by the middle of the next century. By then, those descendants of "Old Stock" Americans who have not fled to Europe will all be playing or watching soccer matches and screaming their passion for the game like a bunch of Bolivians, and some of them may even remember the good old days when their forefathers still had their own country and had only to worry about characters like O.J. Simpson and Rodney King.

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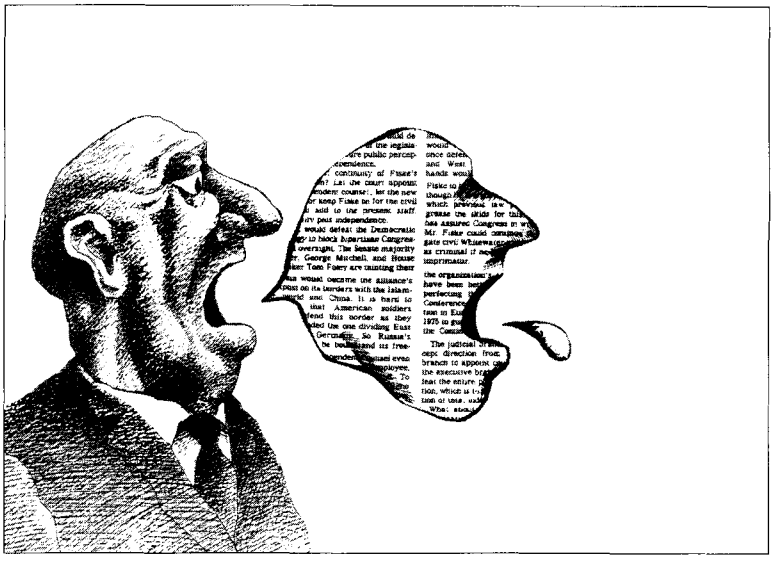

Igor Kopelnitsky

On Liberal Education

by Thomas Fleming

My definition of liberal education as the education of liberals no longer sounds provocative. Liberalism, having failed and failed disastrously in all its political experiments from church disestablishment to women's suffrage to food stamps, still reigns triumphant, with hardly a rival, in the empty corridors of the Western mind. How failed? The church is disestablished, after all; women do vote; and the urban poor still clip the coupons that enable them to lead the life of the idle poor. But the announced intent of these policies was not to change a law or set up a program. Liberal projects always aim at the reformation of society and the amelioration of the human condition, and when the results turn out to be the opposite of the announced intentions, some group of dissident liberals on the make can always be found to criticize the "unintended consequences" of schemes they once favored.

Food stamps, most people will grant me: a program supposed to wean the poor from dependency and teach them the value of money has only succeeded in creating the class of welfare slaves who well might envy life on the old plantation. But the same conclusion can and ought to be applied to every other liberal policy of the past two centuries. Church disestablishment was to give us freedom of conscience and enable a more spiritual religious sense to grow. In fact, we have replaced the grave and beautiful superstitions of our ancestors with the coarse and stupid vulgarities of advice merchants like Dr. Susan Forward, and for the ceremonies of the church we have substituted the rituals of self-abuse: drugs, pornography, and advertising. Women's suffrage—and all the other women's liberation policies—have reduced women to the lowest social and moral plane on which human beings are known to have existed, and in the name of equality we have virtually decriminalized rape.

So far from admitting failure, liberals celebrate their defeats as victories. Their triumphalist mentality is not *all* hypocrisy, because it is the genius of liberalism to insure that each succeeding generation is dumber and less-educated than its predecessor, and after 100 years of liberal education the result is the so-called Generation X, whose historical sense has been shaped by *Brady Bunch* reruns on Nick at Nite and the oldies stations their almost equally obtuse parents listen to as they dream of golden days in the sunshine of their 60's youth.

To plumb the shallows of the liberal mind does not require any extensive research. You do not have to take the trouble to read the editorial pages of the *New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal*. Just find a newspaper with the only section worth reading—the funnies—and look at "Doonesbury," the sclerotic epitome of 60's liberalism. The past few weeks, Mr. Trudeau has been boosting the work of a Yale professor who claims to have discovered evidence for homosexual marriage in the early Church. What, you are shocked? *Everybody* knows that the Old Testament Jews abhorred buggery and that St. Paul regarded the practice of sodomy not so much as a vice in itself but as a terrible punishment visited upon idolatrous pagans. What sort of "evidence" could stand against the unanimous sentence of Christians everywhere at all times? Since, according to *heterosexual* historians, these queer marriages were only pledges of friendship and loyalty, a well-known practice in medieval Europe, such a perversion of scholarship should stand

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little chance of influencing mainstream (i.e., liberal) opinion.

Christians used to say the same thing about patriarchy and women in the clergy, and it was not long before "scholars" were found to "discover" that, yes, there were priestesses in the early Church, the Earth is flat, and the sun rises in the West. Liberals, because of their ideological commitments, cannot do science or scholarship, because they are unwilling to concede that facts might possibly contradict their worldview. Why else do they fall for the patent silliness of postrationalist literary theory: deconstruction, reader response, and feminist discourse? As deconstructionists they can ignore the evidence of their senses, the facts of nature and history, the intentions of the authors of the New Testament and the Constitution.

The French are quite clever at these things, but Americans, who for the most part cannot read French, only parrot platitudes they do not understand. A shocking case of liberal perfidy was discussed recently by Notre Dame law professor Gerard Bradley in a quirky little newsletter called *First Things*. Examining the sworn testimony given at the hearings on Colorado's Amendment Two, Bradley notes that Professor Martha Nussbaum willfully misrepresented the meaning of a passage in Plato's *Laws* to show that Plato did not disapprove of sodomy. Nussbaum, a bona fide academic celebrity on two continents by reason of her gender and her genuflexive liberalism, deliberately cited an out-of-date edition of the standard Greek-English lexicon in order to avoid the entry that disproved her case. To make matters worse, she ridiculed John Finnis, a respectable natural law philosopher, accusing him of relying on translations out of ignorance of Greek. Rumor has it that Nussbaum is now trying to cover up the affair as a friendly disagreement, but she not only perjured herself—which is a crime—but, what is far worse, she prostituted her scholarship to a political cause. If Brown University had any integrity, Nussbaum would spend this summer going door to door in search of a college without any ethical standards. Perhaps there is an opening at Boston University.

The dishonesty of liberals is routinely revealed in court decisions imposing some judge's vision of the good life upon his unwilling subjects. Recently in Illinois a federal judge decreed that Good Friday could no longer be declared a school holiday, for the usual reason of the so-called separation of church and state supposedly guaranteed in the First Amendment. Illinois civil libertarians hailed the decision as a victory for truth, justice, and the American way. If any of them had ever read the Constitution or studied American history, they obviously had agreed not to divulge the ill-kept secret that the Bill of Rights was never meant to be applied to the states, that Massachussetts had a church establishment until 1833, that George Washington himself refused to oppose a bill in the Virginia legislature for the public payment of clergymen.

What is odd about liberals is not so much their ignorance of history and law as their capacity for forgetting what they knew once upon a time. Anyone over the age of 40 remembers a time when school days began with a prayer and a Bible verse, when Christmas was celebrated with hymns and manger scenes. Were Supreme Court Justices from Marshall to Frankfurter simply blind? Did they not know that Christian symbolism permeated public life in the United States? What is it that liberals think they know about the Constitution that neither the Framers nor the leaders of the Republic were able to grasp until a few decades ago?

Some liberals know these facts; they could hardly help learning them, even in the mock universities of the Ivy League. But, as Dr. Johnson used to say, they lie and they know they lie. Their justification for distorting the Constitution and misrepresenting history is that they are working for a better world in which no one point of view is privileged, a society where every individual has dignity. "Celebrate Cultural Diversity," says the sign outside our local YMCA, "One planet, one people." If we are all one people, asks my wife, how can there be diversity? But liberals do not want diversity: instead of a symphony of differing instruments, they want to hear their own voice magnified by endless repetition; they want to see their own face on every poster, their own party listed on both sides of the ballot. Why else do liberals spend so much time writing about what conservatives really ought to believe? And why is it that the true meaning of conservatism always turns out to be liberalism?

It is democratic liberalism, not Marxism, that has torn apart traditional societies, delivered families up to the state, and waged the most terrible wars in human history. It is liberals who would destroy the world to make it safe for democracy.

Nothing so brings out the liar in the liberal as the subject of religion. What, after all, makes religion so radically different from other social and cultural institutions that it must be banned from public places? Is it because of the ceremonies and symbolisms? That can hardly be the case, since all public business is carried on by symbolic ceremonies. The inauguration of a President, the conduct of a trial, the graduation of students, all are attended by the ceremonial processions, magic formulas, and funny costumes that we associate with traditional religions.

If it is not ritual that offends the liberal's sensibilities, it must be the beliefs held by Christians. I say Christians, because their faith is the real target of liberal persecution. If Christianity disappeared, the ACLU would not bother to persecute Jews or Muslims. What Christians believe can be, more or less, summed up in a few principal statements such as the Decalogue and the Nicene Creed, which taken together represent a particular point of view about the nature of the universe (created in the beginning by God) and about the way people ought to live (do not murder, steal, commit adultery, slander, worship false gods). It is this point of view, and its claim to be the truth, that liberals wish to eliminate.

Of course, Christianity is only one such point of view. There are others: some of them, like Judaism and Platonism, are

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close enough to be considered first cousins of the Christian faith; while others, such as Jainism and liberalism, are so alien to Christianity as to make dialogue profitless. Liberalism, it goes without saying, is the dominant point of view of the ruling classes of Europe and the United States. It is the opiate of the sophomore, who thinks he has understood a flower once he has stripped it of its petals and leaves.

Liberalism has many characteristics, some of them worthy of respect—an emphasis on individual dignity and an insistence upon reason—but the essence of liberalism lies in its claim to impartiality. The liberal is supposed to make his judgments as if he were a public official with assets in a blind trust; that is to say, he is to do what some "impartial spectator" would declare to be just and fair. Unlike the traditionalist or the man of faith, the liberal cannot accord his own point of view any privilege, simply because it belongs to him or just because his people have always believed it. The law of liberalism is toleration, because whatever one claims for one's self, the same right must be extended to others, hence Robert Frost's mocking definition that a liberal is someone who would not take his own side in an argument.

In our age, every learned man or woman is an autodidact, and the only real schooling for most of us will be homeschooling.

Frost should have said "a true liberal," because in their quarrels with other philosophical perspectives, taking their own side and ramming it down our throats is all that liberals know how to do. This is especially clear in the church/state controversies. If Christianity cannot be taught or represented in schools, because it is a particular point of view, why should liberalism be tolerated? After all, there is nothing self-evidently true about the basic tenets of liberalism—the human race got along quite well without them for over 99 percent of its history, and most people today live quite comfortably without worrying too much about the categorical imperative. Even if one *believed* liberalism to be the true faith, as a liberal one could not, by definition, *know* it to be true, because such certainties can be given only by the kind of god that liberals do not believe in.

If liberals had even the smallest particle of honesty, they would insist upon applying their judgment on the Christian *Weltanschauung* to their own point of view. And if they did, such concepts as equality, the progress of democracy, ethical rationalism, universal principles, and even the scientific method would all have to be either eliminated or else presented as one point of view, with equal time given to other representative perspectives. For years American Evangelicals have tried to force the courts to acknowledge "secular humanism" as the religion of public education, and while their occasional successes are gratifying as *jeux d'esprit*, theirs is a pointless crusade. The number of full-blooded secular humanists has always been very small, since the movement's appeal is limited to village atheist kooks like B.F. Skinner and Sidney Hook. The real enemy is liberalism itself, a fact that some Evangelicals cannot acknowledge, because so many of them are, beneath the Christian surface, committed liberals. It is democratic liberalism, not Marxism, that has torn apart traditional societies, delivered families up to the state, and waged the most terrible wars in human history. It is liberals who would destroy the world to make it safe for democracy.

There is a certain integrity about the gangster ideologies of communism and Nazism. The Nazi did not claim to be more compassionate and merciful than the Jews and Christians he was persecuting. The Nazi claimed to be their superior in health and courage and freedom, because he was liberated from the Jewish weakness that had infected the Aryan race. Hitler was a guileful politician, but he was honest and consistent in carrying out his announced intentions. The same can be said for the communists, who always said that truth was only what served the cause of their revolution and expressed impatience with all the bourgeois niceties of fair play and independent judgment. We can hardly blame Stalinists, either in the Soviet Union or the United States, for being true to their convictions.

If there is honor among thieves and integrity among Nazis and Stalinists, what can one say of modern liberals, who prate endlessly of tolerance, diversity, and skepticism but devote their lives to imposing their own point of view upon other people's children; who confiscate *our* incomes in order to carry out *their* schemes; who send American boys out to kill and be killed in brutal wars that they insist upon calling, in the sanitized and hypocritical language that liberals always use, crusades for democracy, police actions, and rescue missions? The world has seen, Lord knows, an almost infinite number of bizarre religions and cults, and men have worshiped everything from phalluses to cargo planes, but nothing has been seen under the sun so bizarre and so malevolent as the triumphalist liberals who insist that you agree with them, even as they persecute your faith and brainwash your children. These are men who cannot be faithful to their wives but insist upon writing the laws on marriage and divorce; who cannot believe in the Creator of the universe but insist upon infiltrating and taking over all the churches; who cannot read or write a foreign language but set themselves up as experts on history and literature; who will not tell the truth, even when it can do them no harm, because a single drop of honesty would destroy their superstition, as a single ray of sunlight illuminates a darkened room and reveals its secrets. One of the greatest early liberals was right in his approach to superstition: *écrasez l'infâme*; he only had the wrong religion in mind, and I hope to see the day when the last professor dies at the hands of the last federal judge.

The difference between liberal and conservative scholars can be illustrated by comparing Martha Nussbaum with the far-right classical scholar Revilo P. Oliver. One of the founders of the John Birch Society, a militant anti-Semite, and—like so many racists—a sworn enemy of the Christian faith that grew out of Judaism, Oliver is among the most learned men who have descended into the arena of political commentary. Older right-wingers can amuse each other for hours telling stories of Professor Oliver, who used to wear a gun to class because of the many death threats he had received. When the University of Illinois tried to fire him for writing a cynical piece on the JFK assassination called "Marksmanship in

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Dallas," that bastion of academic civil liberties, the AAUP, refused to defend him. Oliver is a major scholar, an expert on, among other things, the textual tradition of Tacitus, and while his dislike for Jews and Christians has induced him to say many foolish things, he has not, so far as I know, lied about the subjects on which his academic reputation is based. He is a man honest in his prejudices, frank in his follies; most liberals are as incapable of his dignity as of his erudition.

Liberalism is a term that is used to cover a multitude of sins. The doctrines were corrosive from the very beginning, but the liberals themselves were typically honest and civilized men, fair-minded to a fault, moderate in their projects. Enormous contributions to economics and law were made by such British liberals as Adam Smith and Henry Sumner Maine. But the logic of liberalism is a historical dialectic in which each generation is compelled to undermine the certainties that its ancestors took for granted. The target, as it turns out, is always the same: Christendom, and not just Christian faith and Christian institutions. The whole of civilization, the Christian bricolage made out of the ruins of classical and Judaic antiquity has been under attack, and each generation of liberals stands in the senate of fashionable thought, ending every oration on no matter what subject with the clausula *Christiniatas delenda est*: classical art and "classical" music, stable marriages and good table manners ("He ate his dinner like a Christian," they used to say), Aristotelian logic and Ciceronian rhetoric—as well as the languages of Cicero and Aristotle. All must go, because all had been used in the construction of a world that was shot through with the Christian revelation.

Since the 15th century, when skeptics first began to boast of their infidelity, down to the time of the Enlightenment, when self-righteous immoralists like Voltaire taught the educated classes to despise the world of their fathers, and right into our own era of monotonous and ritualized whining chanted weekly in the pages of the *New Republic*, the progress of liberalism can be measured by the loss of faith, the collapse of every ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual standard, the regress of learning. (For perspective, just compare the evil but dignified Walter Lippmann with Michael Kinsley, too frail and insubstantial to be capable of evil.)

To combat this malady of liberalism, we must refresh ourselves at the springs and fountains of our civilization, even those secondary springs that spouted up after going underground for centuries. We live in an age far more barbarous than the early Middle Ages, erroneously called dark, and sitting like savage children in the ruins we might begin the recovery by reacquainting ourselves with certain old friends of the family who have known us all our lives, even if we have never heard their names before: Homer and Vergil, Plato and Cicero, Sophocles and Seneca.

Petrarch, one of the great refounders of our civilization, had no printed books and no real library to rely on most of the time; in fact, he and his young friends had to spend much of their time ferreting out manuscripts of ancient authors that were lying neglected in monastic collections. But to spend a few hours with Petrarch is to rediscover what our civilization is about: a lyric ability to make words sound Mozartean, a temperament passionate in carnal love and Christian faith; wise in morals, at home in the literature of his world, with one eye cast longingly into the next. Although Petrarch, in discovering "the Dark Ages," may be accused of beginning that reactionary revolution against the medieval order that issued, ultimately, in the liberal counterculture, he was himself a staunch defender of Christendom, supporting both Italian Popes and German emperors.

That counterculture has not been, to say the least, all bad. Mozart was an Enlightenment free-thinker, and Goethe himself was deeply infected with the same disease that corrupts the mind of rationalists and romantics alike. The critic's task, the reader's task is to appreciate rather than to deprecate their accomplishments. But let us not deceive ourselves. It is far too late to attempt to go back to some comfortable and creative period when the virus of liberalism seemed like consumption, which, in its early stages, seemed to stimulate the sensibilities of Romantic poets. The patient is now in the terminal phase, wasted, wracked, and coughing blood. To return to health requires a change of climate, the clean air and bright sunshine of a life rooted in the ages of faith and in the brilliant childhood of our culture, the classical past.

Go, if you must, to some finishing school like Yale to collect a degree and meet the future colleagues who will make a professional career possible, but do not imagine for a moment that you will have the opportunity to be educated there. Of course there are eminent specialists on the faculties, and some of them, no doubt, are men of sound learning, but whatever their politics or philosophy, such scholars are undercover agents doing their best in a hostile environment; as covert reactionaries they constitute a fifth column against a liberal regime that is making war on every fact and honest thought it can discover. Truth is treason in the empire of lies.

In our age, every learned man or woman is an autodidact, and the only real schooling for most of us will be homeschooling. Because we frequently receive letters from subscribers who want to know how to begin their lifetime course of home learning, we asked our regular contributors to send in a list of the books they regard as most important. Our intention had been to publish a *Chronicles* booklist from their recommendations, but there was so little overlap, the task proved impossible. After a period of more work, we will produce a pamphlet to distribute, but in the meantime my advice is to begin at the beginning. The central works of ancient literature are available in bilingual Loeb editions from Harvard or in inexpensive paperbacks from Penguin, and one could do worse than "The Great Books of the Western World"—as silly and pretentious as that series is. My personal advice is to start with some great period (the earlier the better) that catches your fancy—fifth-century Athens, Rome in the Late Republic, Florence in the Renaissance, England under the Stuarts. Read everything you can, poetry, history, philosophy, speeches, letters; in other words, read yourself into the imagination of another age, and when you are exhausted, move on. Inevitably, you will forget the details, but your own imagination will never recover: some part of you will always be Attic or Tuscan, and you may need that part some day, when the idiots have you where they want you.

The drug addict Alexander King used to say that the only thing that consoled him, when he was arrested and forced to go cold turkey, were the hours and hours of poetry he had memorized in a variety of languages. Short of a memory transplant, they cannot take that away from you, not even with a thousand hours of CNN coverage of the House of Representatives, not even if you are condemned to Duke with a sentence of a Ph.D. in English literature. When the scholars are ignorant liars, it is our job to be educated and honest, "like old Boethius, biding his time among suspicious Goths." ◁C

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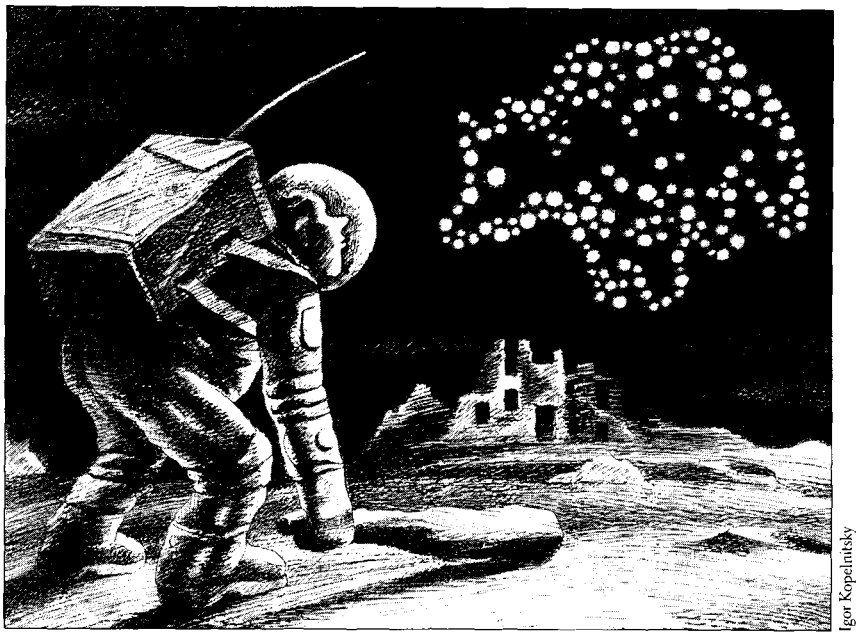
To Hell With Culture

by John Lukacs



"The corruption of man," Emerson wrote, "is followed by the corruption of language." The reverse is true, and a century later Georges Bernanos had it right: "The worst, the most corrupting lies are problems wrongly stated." How pertinent this is about so many matters present, including the use of the word *culture*. My conservative friends now say that with the monstrous perils of communism gone, the main problems of this country are cultural. They mean multiculturalism and other allied matters, too: the counterculture, rap culture, pop culture, media culture, the cultural elite, the culture of violence, etc., etc. They mean well (at least some of them do), but their language is wrong and, consequently, so is their thinking. When people speak of "multiculturalism," what they really mean is multicivilization, whose proponents want the coexistence of altogether different civilizations within the same country. Only: What kind of coexistence? The same goes for the other terms, which are even more meaningless. Think, for instance, of that current cliché: "the culture of violence." It is not *violence* that threatens us; it is the prevalence of *savagery*. It is not the state of *culture* that we should lament; it is the breakdown of *civilization*. This is not a semantic argument. Can one speak of a civilization of violence (or of savagery)? No, because the opposite of civilization is barbarism, whereas the opposite of culture is . . . well, nature.

The notion that culture is of a higher order than civilization is relatively recent. The ancients had no word for culture. They had other words: civic and civility, which (like *polis* and "politic," from which many of our words such as "city," "citizen"—or the Roman "urbane," "urbanity"—derive) were the antitheses of barbarity and barbarism. "Culture," in English (as also in other European languages), meant cultivation. For a long time it was inseparable from agriculture; it was applied metaphorically to the cultivation of minds. "Civilize," in English, appears first in 1601: "to make civil; to bring out of a state of barbarism; to instruct in the arts of life; to enlighten and refine." For the present idea of "culture" we may thank the Germans. They developed the idea that *Kultur* was higher than *Zivilisation*. German heavy thinkers such as Spengler hammered away at this: civilization is mechanical (and artificial); culture is spiritual (and organic). He worked on his *Decline* (more precisely: *Sinking, Untergang*) *of the West* during the First World War, when many Germans were convincing themselves that they were a *Kulturvolk*, a people of culture, superior to a nation of shopkeepers, the English, who were only civilized. Where this idea got the Germans we know, or ought to know. Where this notion has got us at the end of the 20th century—and especially in America—we ought to think about.

A hundred years ago, intellectuals (a distinct group of people beginning to form then) were inclined to accept the superiority of culture over civilization, for more reasons than we do

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John Lukacs is a historian and author, most recently, of Destinations Past: Traveling through History with John Lukacs *(University of Missouri Press).*

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now. Matthew Arnold suggested it powerfully in "Dover Beach." What he could not yet see was the evolution—or the devolution—of intellectuals, convinced as the latter were that the superiority of culture over civilization was represented by their superiority over the philistines. Yet we can see that intellectuals may become, or indeed be, even less civilized than are philistines. (Especially when intellectuals promote all kinds of barbarisms of their own.) In any event, American intellectuals—perhaps particularly because of their feeling of isolation from other Americans—were especially inclined to accept and propagate this culture-civilization antithesis: yes, American civilization may have been the most advanced in the world when it came to housing, heating, plumbing, transporting, producing; but American culture had yet to catch up. Well, American civilization is no longer the most advanced in the world, while—or, perhaps, because—American culture *has* caught up. Intellectuals have often lamented the inadequacy of American culture, while they surely knew how to profit from American civilization. Among other things, they wished that there were more Greenwich Villages in this country. Well now there are—sordid enclaves of barbarism, most of them.

Yes, you cannot have civilization without some culture. But when civilization breathes and lives and is strong, culture will arise, it will take care of itself. This essay is not an etymological treatise. Its purpose is to insist on the priority of a preoccupation with civilization, at the expense of the preoccupation with culture. The signs of the breakdown of American civilization are all around us. Their illustration would require an encyclopedic jeremiad. More and more people, all kinds of people, recognize what is going on. Sensitive people already exist whose experiences lead them to use the proper term—as, for example, James Prothero, a public school teacher in Southern California, in a recent article in the *New Oxford Review*: "Civilization has ceased to exist in the urban area around my high school." (This in the principal state of "multiculturalism.")

Unlike in the case of Greece or Rome, the barbarians are not at the gate (though some of them *are* pouring through). They are inside, and I do not only mean those coming up from the subway. Readers may now suppose that I am thinking only, or mostly, of blacks. I am not. The barbarism burgeoning across this country has been propagated by the culture of whites, and I do *not* mean slavery. That is long gone. What are not gone are movies, television, talk radio, books, magazines, music, art—yes, art—propagating juvenility, irresponsibility, loudness, corrupt language, sexual prowess, physical brutality, and pornography and leading to a widespread decay not only of "values" and of standards of behavior but of imagination. The worst barbarian talk I have ever listened to was the self-centered, endless monologue of an Italian-American taxi driver from Brooklyn to Manhattan. In 1870, William Dean Howells welcomed Italians to America: "a race that is immemorially civilized." "Scratch the mask of a modern Italian," he wrote, "and you will find a polite pagan." The Irish were the barbarians: "Scrape one of these Yankeefied Celts and you'll find a savage." He could not have been more wrong. He *may* have been right about those poor Italian immigrants 100 years ago. What American crowd culture has made some of their descendants into is another story.

Neither rock nor porn was invented by blacks. (Nor were blues and jazz: those were fusions of black musical talent and sensitivity with Anglo-Saxon forms of harmony and modern syncopation, at a time when the ambition of American blacks amounted to more than emulation of whites, when their ambition was to acquire their rightful place within an American civilization.) The pictorial and popular culture that celebrates physicality, sexuality, juvenility, self-indulgence, and primitiveness, whether in high art or low (including actors and singers and rock groups who call themselves "conservatives" or who are taken up enthusiastically by "conservatives") are produced and represented and consumed by whites. (Think only of the happiness on Richard Nixon's face when he had the privileged moment of welcoming Elvis Presley in the Oval Office.) So are advertisements produced by whites, including their half-naked and stubble-faced *vitelloni*. (It is interesting to notice that no black models are ever pictured unshaven.) When primitiveness is prized, need one be surprised that blacks prove to be good at it and that whites are afraid of them in the streets—which, of course, is the obverse of what white "racism" is supposed to be?

There is plenty of "culture" thrown at children in our schools, but very little of civilization. We now have hordes of young people to whom not only the notions but the very words "civilization" and "civilized" are hardly known—at a time when more people mouth the word "culture" than ever before. And this has a special pertinence to the United States, where our forefathers were convinced of their duty to bring civilization to the New World—a greater task even than its preservation of the Old. (I read the diary of a Southern gentleman who, in 1818, referred to "my forefathers," to "their duty of bringing civilization and Christianity to a new country" —and that was a public duty, too.)

When a civilization functions, so do its public institutions. A hundred years ago, American public schools, public hospitals, etc., were among the best in the world. Since that time the very sense of what is "public" has decayed: our public schools, public hospitals, public transportation are avoided and shunned by many people. But at least in one important respect there is no difference between those public schools where the young maim and occasionally murder each other and the most expensive of private institutions. *All* American schools are hardly more than custodial institutions now—to keep young people off the streets and away from home, and not only in the event that both of their parents are at work. (Why married American women discovered the desire to seek an outside job, something that began only after 1960, is an allied question, because at that time there were no financial reasons for most of them to do so. What they found was that all of the "culture" available to them in their suburban lives—magazines, books, the stereo, the radio, the television, the occasional art class at the community center—meant nothing: what they grew tired of was loneliness, compounded by the surrogate "civilization" in the suburbs.) Whether in an inner-city school or at Harvard, the young are not taught civilization. I do not mean the teaching of good manners—that disappeared some time ago. (Though Goethe was right: there are no manners which do not have a moral foundation somewhere.) Nor do I mean the older American public school practice of teaching good citizenship. I mean a respect for life, for an orderly life that is inseparable not only from a respect for learning but from a respect for one's provenance, for language, and for the ability to read, write, and listen. Almost half of our young now spend

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nearly *20 years* in schools, with the result that most of them cannot read and write and express themselves adequately.

This has something to do with the propaganda about the Information Explosion. ("Explosion," with its destructive connotation, is the *mot juste*.) There is a breakdown of communication, part and parcel of the breakdown of civilization, an information "culture" that has nothing to do with in-formation, for *that* requires listening. Since entire generations no longer know how to listen, we have this widening breakdown of communication (and, thus, of civility) between parents and children, husbands and wives, lovers, teachers and students, and so on. When "culture" can (as it already does) degenerate into mere entertainment, "civilization," too, can degenerate into mere telephoning.

Should government promote 'culture' at all? That is at least arguable. What is not arguable is that government must protect civilization. When it fails to do so, government, as we know it, dissolves, with first anarchy and then barbaric tyranny succeeding it.

Civilization includes paying attention to others. Rare that is now, particularly in the world of scholarship—or, as the cliché goes, in "the community of scholars." There is no such community. There is the old saw about the specialist who knows more and more about less and less. There was nothing very wrong with that. What we now have are academic bloviators who know less and less about more and more, while the majority of their colleagues read less and less and write (or, rather, process words) more and more. If that is culture, then the hell with it. Meanwhile, a professor who says something critical about a Mexican or a Chinese or a homosexual may be punished, having bucked multiculturalism. Another professor who engages in carnal commerce with his students has done nothing wrong. Such judgments are products of a progressively broadening "culture." They are also the products of advancing barbarism, not of civilization, as in sex education, which, too, has nothing to do with the advance of civilization. It is public instruction for mechanical and antiseptic, safe and sinless carnality, at a time when one of the marks of a broken-down civilization is the decay of privacy—and of a sense of sin (that sense of sin without which sex tastes like egg without salt).

Clothes do not make the man, or woman, but they do illustrate many things. In the past young people looked forward to the day when they could acquire and wear the clothes (together with other rights and privileges) of adults. Now the more "progressive" the professor the more he apes the clothes, habits, words, and sounds of the young. Young men no longer emulate mature men; but since it is in the nature of youth to emulate, they emulate the customs and the clothes of the barbarians they see, often through their determined cult of ugliness. In sum, there is a culture of juvenility, while there is no such thing as a juvenile civilization. There cannot be. Civilization calls for maturity, and our culture now is largely puerile—consider only that the majority of movies and records are made for teenage consumers. This kind of cultural rot has pervaded the national economy—the so-called material basis of our society. As reported in the *New York Times* last year, four of the five most successful stocks of the previous six years were Coca-Cola, Pepsico, Motorola, and Disney, producers and promoters of juvenile slurping and of puerile entertainment, i.e., Fizz, i.e., the Youth Culture. Three of the principal "losers" were IBM, Westinghouse, and Ford. This tells us something about where not only American culture but American industry is going, or not going. (Eight months later I read a column in the *Times* by William Safire, who, a proponent of "free enterprise," attacked those who object to turning the Virginia battlefields of the Civil War into a great Disney theme park and entertainment center. Safire is a Republican, a "conservative," and a self-proclaimed "Man of the Right.") Civilization means the restriction of many a "freedom." When will our newfangled—and many of the not-so-newfangled—"conservatives" and "libertarians" ever learn?

The main problem of the coming century will be people's relationship to the land. But the pollution of land, indeed, of all matter, is preceded and produced by the pollution of minds. Here we face a particular American problem, misread by Thoreau, who was a good writer but a poor thinker. He was a Rousseauite, believer in the myth of the Noble Savage, convinced that man is the enemy of nature—which is also the doctrine of some of our extreme environmentalists. Their worship of nature goes hand-in-hand with their denigration of humanity. That may be a cult, but it is the very opposite of civilization. Ever since the Greeks, civilization has had a long historical connection not only with urbanity but also with nature and the land; it aims at an aesthetic and fructiferous harmony between man and nature, protecting both; it desires the preservation of land but also the formation of landscapes that are neither overrun by nor vacant of humanity, since without any human presence a landscape does not exist.

It is the—often masochistic—contempt of civilized man that marks much of "modern" culture in the 20th century. I will not go so far as to say that Picasso or Klee or Le Corbusier—and, yes, Frank Lloyd Wright—were neobarbarians (though the case can and will one day be made), even preceding John Cage or Jackson Pollock or the ghoulish Warhol and that example of an oxymoron, the Museum of Primitive Art; they were surely opponents not of culture but of civilization. (I read that Woody Allen is a "cultural icon." Perhaps, but is he an emblem of civilization?)

We live in a society where the term "middle class" has lost all of its meaning, since nearly everybody is "middle-class" in one way or another, including criminals, who are no longer a recognizable or definable stratum of the population. The crime rate rises rapidly, yet the proportion of professional criminals, professional burglars, professional robbers, professional prostitutes actually decreases. Because of the breakdown of civilization, that once grey area, or no-man's-land, between the

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habitual (and recognizable) criminal and the common citizen has now spilled over into vast areas of society, and I am not even thinking of the criminality of drug abusers. I am thinking of the awful fact—and it is a fact—that large numbers of part-time burglars and part-time robbers and part-time prostitutes now regard themselves, and are not infrequently regarded by others, as more or less normal and (to alarmingly many people) as more or less acceptable citizens. Why not, since prototypes of many of them are so portrayed in movies, television, etc. Within that enormous bubble of a national middle class there is now a wide scatteration of barbarians; and the sense of community, which is inseparable from the relations of the sexes (the sexual act in itself meaning the temporary formation of a community of two), has changed. Now it is men and women not of the same "class" but of the same "culture" that seek each other out, which is an interesting and even intriguing development, though it has little to do with civilization, the decay of which has now seeped down deep enough to involve the relations of the sexes. For meanwhile, the insistence on women's rights proceeds apace with the loss of respect for them, which is extremely damaging to civilization, since women are the natural creators and protectors not only of their young but of the virtues of domesticity and of privacy.

The American ideal of government includes the protection of domesticity and privacy through the maintenance of enough law and order to guarantee the safety of citizens so that they can prosper freely. But we have long forgotten that it is more difficult to be free than not to be free. *That* depends on civilization. In 1848 Colonel Richard B. Mason drafted a proclamation to the inhabitants of California, after a treaty had ceded it to the United States from Mexico. The United States was bringing civilization to California, with a stable government administering equal justice. "The arts and sciences will flourish, and the labor of the agriculturist, guided by the lamp of learning, will stimulate the earth to the most beautiful production." Well, civilization in California, as well as in the United States government, is in plenty of trouble now, not the least because of productions of "culture," not agriculture. Meanwhile "the arts and sciences" have become dependent on the government, with plenty of trouble there, too, because of the absence of cultural "standards." But this is not only a problem of standards; it is a practical one. Should government promote "culture" at all? That is at least arguable. What is not arguable is that government must protect civilization. When it fails to do so, government, as we know it, dissolves, with first anarchy and then barbaric tyranny succeeding it.

It is possible to exaggerate the virtues of civilization. It is possible to exaggerate the virtues of Babbitts, but the idea of Babbitt is now at least two generations behind us. Yes, there were too many Babbitts in this country at the time of Sinclair Lewis and Calvin Coolidge. But this was a powerful civilization then, with ample and varied opportunities for the tending of culture, when even the Babbitts, innocents as Sinclair Lewis described them, were made to pay some respect to culture, usually through the insistence of their wives. The yuppies are the grandchildren of the Babbitts; they are not innocent; they are "culture-oriented," except that theirs is a movie culture. The *New Yorker*, founded during the Babbitt era, was supposed to have proclaimed that its readership would not include old ladies in Dubuque. Well, for some years now the last readers of the old *New Yorker*, the remnant members of civilization, the true American *Kulturträgerinnen* were, and still are, a few old ladies in places such as Dubuque, while the *New Yorker* has become a soft-porn *Vanity Fair*, with a few culture cookies thrown in, but just about devoid of civilization, and with an emphatic presence of what its editor thinks is a tony barbarism.

I read that Miss Susan Sontag has appeared in Sarajevo, arranging a performance there of *Waiting for Godot*. What endangers the lives of people there is a breakdown of civilization, not of culture; but that is not my point. I respect the courage of her impulse; but I question the clarity of her purpose. When the Papuans will again practice cannibalism—inspired by what they have seen of it on American television—will their victims be Waiting for Sontag? We face something new in the long history of mankind. One can have culture without civilization. The progressive notion of the great chain of evolution—from primitiveness to civilization to culture—has become laughable. c

Should Conservatives Leave the Republican Party?

This provocative topic was debated by political strategists Howard Phillips and David Keene and is now available both on video and audio tapes. The June 3 issue of *Human Events* carried lengthy excerpts of this charged event. But here's an opportunity to receive a more complete rendering of the arguments along with the introduction by Michael Warder of The Rockford Institute, host of the event. The cost for the video, including postage and handling, is $24.95, while the audio is $9.95. You may order by calling:

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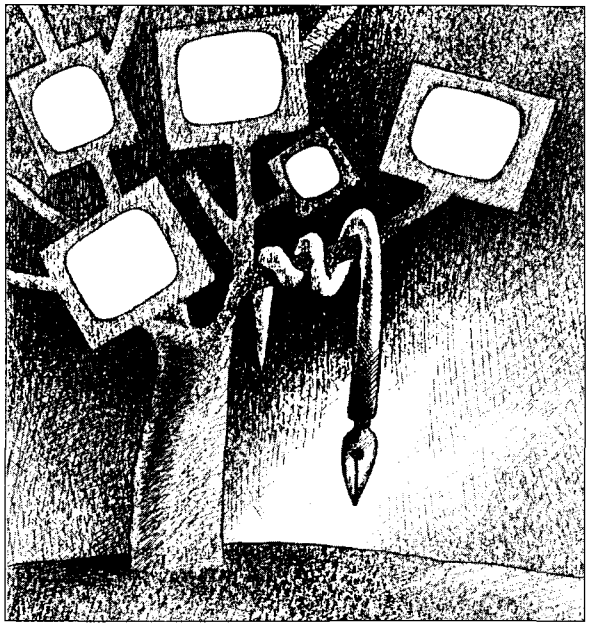
Technovandals and the Future of Libraries

by Michael Gorman



Igor Kopelnitsky

There are discussions at all levels of government about the future of libraries. The federal government is proceeding with plans for the I-WAY (otherwise known as the National Information Superhighway), blithely assuming that it will, at a time and cost and in a manner unknown, supersede most if not all library services and programs. It is taken for granted that the texts of articles and books will be available on the I-WAY at some point in the not-too-distant future. The eerie thing about these discussions is the absence of practical solutions to some problems (copyright and intellectual freedom chief among them) and the assumption that some very weighty practical and technical problems will be solved miraculously by the march of technology. At a more mundane level, universities, municipalities, and school districts are wrestling with the increasing costs of, and the diminishing resources available to, the libraries for which they are responsible.

The multiyear financial squeeze on public institutions imposed by the retrograde public policy of the last 20 years has imposed tremendous burdens on school, public, and academic libraries. To take but one example of many, one of the effects of the "Tax Revolt" in California has been that the richest state of the richest nation on earth ranks 50th out of the 50 states in the proportion of librarians to students in the public schools. Viewed superficially, this may seem regrettable but relatively unimportant. In truth, the effects are far-reaching. Many students entering California's universities, even the best and brightest of them, lack even vestiges of library skills and, more importantly, have not the habit of reading. The former can be partially remedied *if* the students can be caught as freshmen and *if* college and university libraries have the human and financial resources to mount a comprehensive library instruction program. The latter is a permanent blight. Those who can read functionally but do not read cannot think or write coherently. The net result of the neglect of California's school libraries is a generation of college graduates who have only the narrowest education, who lack the research skills necessary to a full and productive life, and who may never know the joys and rewards of the intellectual life. This is a danger to democracy and society.

Some of the effects of the financial crisis of libraries are obvious—no school librarians; closed public library branches (in a few California cases, whole county library systems have been discontinued); canceled journals; record low levels of book purchase. Some are more insidious, and their results may not be obvious to the general public for many years—for example, the incremental effect on a community whose children know nothing of libraries because there is no accessible public library branch. There is one issue, above all others, that may have the direst long-term effects. That issue—which is, ironically, seen by some as entirely beneficial—concerns the impact of electronic technology on libraries, learning, and society as a whole. Given the general public image of libraries and librarians, it is interesting to note that libraries have been in the forefront of technological innovation. They have long had computerized catalogs, circulation systems, and other housekeeping systems. Almost all libraries have extensive programs providing access to a wealth of electronic information systems (bibliographic, statistical, and full-text) both in CD-ROM and online. In short, they have completed the move from (in the words of Michael Buckland) the Paper Library (paper documents controlled by paper files) to the Automated Library (paper documents controlled by electronic files). The next step is the bone of contention—should libraries move to the *Electronic* Library (electronic documents controlled electronically)? The question is oversimplified, because the issue is not whether libraries should or will have an electronic document component (that is already

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Michael Gorman is dean of library services at California State University. This is an expanded and revised version of an article published in the February 15 issue of Library Journal.

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happening) but whether electronic documents will enhance—or be used as an excuse to destroy—the print-based library.

When it comes to the "Is the Book Dead?" debate, one can find in the writings and speeches of even sensible pundits, politicians, and academics the kind of semantic confusion and elision that bespeaks the half-digested idea, the failure to think through what one is saying. This intellectual skating on thin ice began, I believe, with the peculiar usage in recent years of the word "information"—a word that has become so distorted and elastic as to be meaningless, hence entirely suitable to vapid phrases like the "Information Age" and "information science." Given that one could use "information" to mean anything from a small set of numbers to a tour de force of analysis to a masterpiece of world literature, one was free to assume that there was no qualitative difference between different kinds of "information." Further, given that assumption, it is easy, if intellectually shoddy, to assume that all kinds of "information" can and should be digitized; that the imminent Information Age would not need books and other nondigitized carriers of "information" and that libraries and librarians would soon take their place on the ash-heap of history. Regrettably, this specious line of reasoning has been swallowed by many, including many librarians. The professional literature is swamped with drivel about "virtual libraries" and "libraries without walls," yet the central practical problems behind those phrases are largely ignored. We forget at our peril that there are higher "goods of the mind" (a phrase coined by Mortimer Adler) than information (they are—in ascending order—knowledge, understanding, and wisdom). Unfortunately for the seers of the Information Age, those goods are not amenable to electronic transmission. Leaving aside the very real issues of copyright and authority of texts, the fact remains that the book—print on paper—is unrivaled for the sustained reading of texts that alone leads to knowledge and understanding.

The enemies of the academic library fall into three classes: bureaucrats, technocrats, and technovandals. The bureaucrats are, in academe, the exact analogy of the nonmedical hospital administrator. They know little or nothing of education or libraries. They know only that libraries cost a lot of money, money that could be saved if libraries were to be dismantled behind a smoke screen of technology. The technocrats believe that technology can be used to provide an equal to, or something better than, what they always call "traditional" library services. The technovandals want to use technology to break up the culture of learning and, in a weird mixture of 90's cybervision and 60's radicalism, to replace that world with a howling wilderness of unstructured, unrelated gobbets of "information" and random images in which the hapless student or teacher wanders without direction or sense of value. Too strong? Consider these words from an October 1993 draft of "Leveraging the Future: The Telecommunications Plan" of California State University's Academic Communications Network Committee of the Academic Information Resources Council:

> . . . learners increasingly can be free to determine their own learning paths divorced from the sequential, linear, directed flow of printed text, or the weight of authority. Responsibility for collecting, organizing, and analyzing information can be shifted from the provider to the end user. In the learning environment which [*sic*] is student centered and student controlled, learning becomes less structured and more associative, intuitive, dynamic, and potentially more creative.

I read these words on the 37th anniversary of the day that I first worked in a library. They did more to illuminate the thinking and motives of those who are dedicated to destroying academic libraries than anything I have ever heard or read. Students, teachers, and all those interested in education and learning would do well to heed their warning and understand their implications for education and society. These are people to whom the sustained reading of linear texts—the culture of the book—is anathema. Whenever they hear the word "culture," they reach for their computer.

The argument that rages (mostly, but not always, covertly) over the position and future of libraries in universities and colleges is ultimately about money and power. There is always an administrative faction that knows the price of libraries but not their value. Most, if not all, librarians, faculty, and students know the value of libraries but do not control the funds necessary to preserve that value. Some of those who wish to choke off libraries are simply interested in gaining the power that would come from appropriating library funds and using them for computing and other technologies. If the report from which the above quotations derives is to be taken seriously, as it should be, it shows that the dispute is about learning, culture, and freedom as well as money and power.

The recipe for wresting money from academic libraries and gaining the power that goes with it is simple. First, denigrate libraries as "museums of compressed wood pulp"—the leaden phrase of "futurist" Raymond Kurzweil, whom, astoundingly, *Library Journal* (the library periodical with the largest circulation in the world) regularly lets air his antilibrary, antibook vaporings—then treat any reaction to this caricature as emanating from fearful Luddites. Stir in a hefty dash of sexism (most librarians are female and, therefore, cannot possibly be expected to understand the brave, thrusting male world of computing) and lashings of info-babble about superhighways, wallet-sized libraries, libraries without walls, paradigm shifts, etc., and in no time you will have an army of simpletons, coconspirators, and the honestly puzzled nodding in unison at your insight and progressive thinking.

The antilibrary, antibook forces cover their greed and destructiveness with a veneer of respectability bestowed on them by scholars who, seduced by unexamined claims about technology, become their unwitting dupes. Librarians and friends of libraries should do two things. First, allow no promise or blandishment of those who would destroy libraries to go unquestioned. Second, devise a constructive program that uses technology to enhance library services, to preserve the best of what we have, and to rise to new levels of library service. We should not permit positive acceptance of technology to be used against libraries. It often seems, to put it bluntly, that scholars and librarians can never do enough to satisfy the antibook, antilibrary forces. Nothing short of permanently barred library doors and bonfires of books will placate that crowd. If anyone doubts this, he or she should read any of the numerous pronouncements of the futurists. How about "a new secular ethic rooted in a nanosecond culture, virtual communities, and virtual reality experiences" or "the day of fully viable virtual books [*sic*] is not far off." Raymond Kurzweil, again in *Library Journal*.

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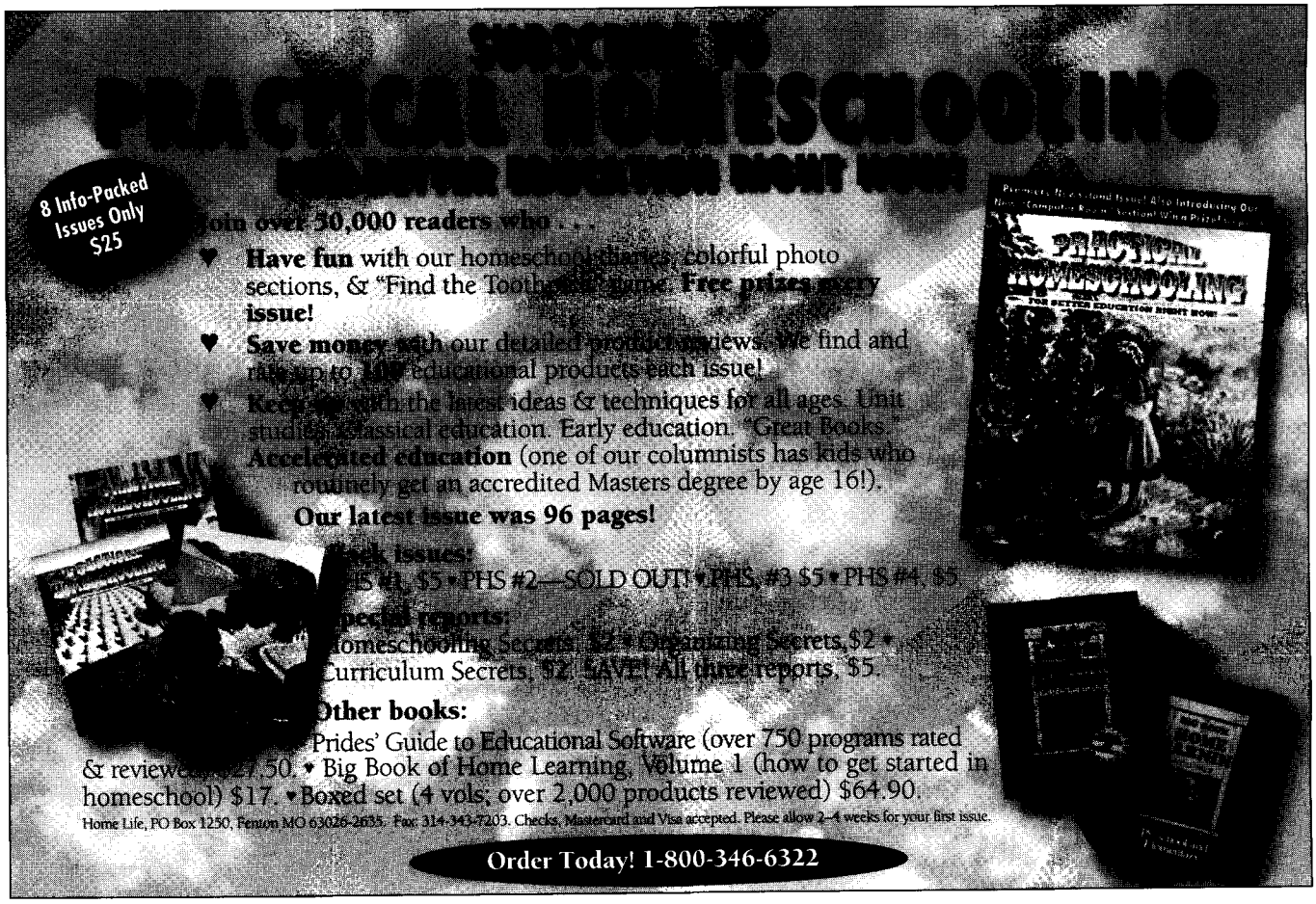
It is a refreshing, but rare, experience to read or hear from someone who questions the economic feasibility and practicality of the bookless future envisaged by the technovandals. It is even rarer to hear someone ask, "Even if we *can* do these things, why would we want to?" One person who asks these questions to brilliant effect is Walt Crawford, a librarian with the Research Libraries Group with whom I am writing a book on the future of libraries. In a number of recent papers given at professional conferences, Crawford sums up a host of issues, economic and technical, that go to the hollow heart of the antilibrary movement.

It is indisputable that, in Crawford's words, "no electronic medium can even *begin* to compare with ink on paper for readability, particularly for sustained reading." It is also indisputable that the *best* resolution of the characters in electronically transmitted light is greatly inferior to that of the characters in the *worst* printed text using reflected light. There is no foreseeable answer to this problem. This means that, in the electronic future of the technovandals, any sustained reading will be done with expensive, resource-wasting printouts that are themselves greatly inferior to economical printed texts. Wait a minute, though. Technovandals believe that the sustained reading of texts is unnecessary and bad. There are only two positions to take logically. On the one hand, you can believe in the power of sustained reading to enlighten, teach, illuminate, and entertain and, therefore, must grant that the printed book is the best technology we have and are likely to have in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, you can believe in the dumbing down of society to a state of ignorance for the masses and "information" for those who have money and want to make more.

None of the technovandals has addressed the economics of their dystopia in a convincing way. As Crawford points out, only a seventh of the cost of printed materials is due to printing and distribution (other estimates put the proportion as low as a tenth). All the remaining costs will be incurred whether texts are printed or distributed electronically. Even if electronic storage and distribution were free (which they most certainly will not be), the savings would be marginal. This has to be understood in the context of the enormous cost of the destruction of the publishing industry and its replacement by an electronic system funded by . . . whom?

To ignore the economic foundations of a hypothetical world of digitized knowledge and information is to ignore the real threat to freedom that such a world represents. The inconceivably massive capital required to destroy and replace print-based knowledge and information industries can only come from the government in alliance with mega-industry. Those who have the gold make the rules, and those who invest billions in the new digitized world will have control over every aspect of it. The potential for censorship, control of access to knowledge and information, and limitation of intellectual freedom is limitless. If those to whom the life of the mind is important acquiesce in this destruction they shall, by their silence, be committing the ultimate treason to learning and to intellectual freedom. c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All Such Filthy Cheats

by Theodore Pappas

Igor Kopelnitsky

When Vice Admiral Bobby Ray Inman announced on January 18 his decision not to pursue confirmation as Secretary of Defense, he repeated Robert Massie's old charge that William Safire is a plagiarist, saying this "does not, in my judgment, put [Safire] in a position to frame moral judgment on any of us, in or out of public service." The battle that ensued between Safire and Inman on the one hand and between Safire and Massie on the other dragged on for months and included ad hominem attacks launched from *Nightline*, the *Nation*, and the *New York Times*. And though the real issue was not whether Safire is a plagiarist—but whether he had aided and abetted one by distributing an unpublished manuscript by Massie to another writer who ravaged it for an article in *Esquire*—this high-profile caterwauling made one thing clear: plagiarism has become one of the nagging issues of our day.

"If you pillage someone else's memoir for your source material, it tends to indicate a thinness of literary imagination," said an anonymous New York editor to the *Washington Post*. What this Valachi of Grub Street was too cowardly to say is that plagiarists are often untalented louts, and that the lout in question was the ballyhooed young novelist David Leavitt. Last September Bernard Knox pointed out in the *Washington Post Book World* that Leavitt's new novel, *While England Sleeps*, reproduces the story of the failed homosexual affair that British poet Stephen Spender recounts in *World Within World*, his 1951 autobiography. Leavitt stole the basic story and then embellished it with lurid detail. "I don't see why [Leavitt] should unload all his sexual fantasies onto me in my youth," complained Spender, who now is married. Spender sued Leavitt for copyright infringement and for breach of his "moral right" to control use of his writings, a "right" stemming from a new and controversial copyright law in Britain. As a result of the lawsuit, Viking Press canceled Leavitt's book in February in both Britain, where the suit was filed and the book still warehoused, and the United States, where the novel had already reached bookstores and libraries. The American paperback edition of the book, scheduled for this fall, has also been canceled. "The disowning of a newly published novel is extremely unusual," reported the *Washington Post*. "For a writer like the 32-year-old Leavitt, who has often been cast as a spokesman for his generation, it is unprecedented."

When Baudelaire wondered "how a man of honor could take a newspaper in his hands without a shudder of disgust," he must have had something like the *Washington Post* in mind. For a publisher's disavowal of an author at the eleventh hour may be unusual, but this fiasco with Leavitt is hardly "unprecedented." Jacob Epstein, whose father is editorial director of Random House and whose mother is coeditor of the *New York Review of Books*, was the literary elite's Boy Wonder of 1979, and it was much to their chagrin to learn in late 1980 that the protégé on whom they had bestowed lavish praise had actually plagiarized his Great American Novel, *Wild Oats* (which ironically deals with plagiarism), from a novel by Martin Amis published in 1974, *The Rachel Papers*. Unsurprisingly, Epstein was allowed to slink quietly away, reportedly to a career in that land of tinsel where creativity and originality are not requisites for success—Hollywood.

"Leavitt's aura has been damaged, to state the obvious," concluded the anonymous editor to the *Post*. More obvious still is that the day of the talented reprobate has long since passed. There have always been decadent writers in the West, but the ones we once praised and hailed as artists had more in common with the model citizens of the most civilized nations than with the poseurs, hucksters, and voyeurists of today for whom high culture is the AIDS quilt and performance art. Sade, Wilde, Lawrence, and Gide never needed to plagiarize salacious scenes from the works of others: if personal experience with depravity proved an insufficient wellspring, they were skilled enough to render it fictionally on their own. With "spokesmen" like David Leavitt and Jacob Epstein, what their generation needs is a Milli Vanilli Award in Creative Writing.

Another blow to the literati occurred in April, when Ballantine Books announced that Indrani Aikath-Gyaltsen, the "promising" novelist who committed suicide late last year, had plagiarized her widely acclaimed novel *Cranes' Morning* from Elizabeth Goudge's 1956 novel *The Rosemary Tree*. Aikath-Gyaltsen, who was born in India but educated in the

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Theodore Pappas is the managing editor of Chronicles.

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United States, had merely changed the story's setting from England to her native land, substituted Hindu for Christianity wherever appropriate in the text, and then purloined virtually verbatim whatever was left. The Goudge estate in England was so incensed that it pressed Ballantine not only for a public condemnation of the plagiarism but for a worldwide recall of all copies of the fraudulent work.

Jacqueline Singh, writing last year in India's *Book Review*, had found it strange that "details of the physical surroundings [described in Aikath-Gyaltsen's book] seem more reminiscent of Europe or England," that "villagers' thatched-roofed hovels are called 'lodgers' and villagers themselves 'countrymen,'" and that the "rich landlords, more at home with English fairy tales, nursery rhymes and Shakespeare than with Hindu mythology and Tagore, are difficult to 'place.'" But far from sniffing out the scones beneath the curry, Ms. Singh concluded that "all these anomalies on the Indian scene would doubtless make the setting more accessible to foreign readers at whom the novelette may be aimed." And she may have been right. After all, the *Washington Post* had praised the novelist for believing "we all live in one borderless culture."

America's literary establishment was once again embarrassed. *Publishers Weekly* had gushed that Aikath-Gyaltsen "dissects domestic life with the gimlet precision of Jane Austen." The *New York Times* had called her novel "magic," "full of humor and insight," with "a countryside you suspect you may have visited before." The *Washington Post* had said "exquisite," a book "at once achingly familiar and breathtakingly new." And I thought Henny Yongman was dead.

Eastern book publishers and news editors were appalled at the "brazenness" of this "talented" writer, but was it really the brazenness that bothered them or just the yolk dripping from their faces? For too busy professing their shock and consternation, they entirely missed the moral of this story: that a book which was originally panned by the critics as little more than a penny dreadful became a monumental work of literature forty years later once plagiarized and placed in a Third World setting. Transnationalism and open borders, the politicization of standards, an obsession with diversity, a culture hell-bent on self-flagellation—herein lies a tale about more than plagiarism.

An equally disturbing tale involves the plagiarisms of Joe Cobb, the Heritage Foundation's John M. Olin Senior Fellow in Political Economy. The *Wall Street Journal*'s Paul Gigot had assured his readers in a May 5 column that the Clinton-backed proposal of a World Trade Organization posed no threat to American sovereignty because the "independent" trade expert of the "opposition" party had analyzed it and declared it safe and sound. "Mr. Cobb, the GOP economist who's studied the GATT text, says, yes [to the WTO], because the WTO is no threat to American self-rule. . . . He says he'd shutter both the World Bank and International Monetary Fund if he could, but the WTO is different." What Mr. Gigot apparently did not know is that Cobb's "independent" analysis is a virtual duplication of a study by the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations (ACTPN). Whole sections of Cobb's "assessment" are lifted directly from ACTPN's work. Composed primarily of corporate and banking interests, ACTPN was hired by Clinton's Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, produced its study by government contract, and now leads the lobbying effort on Capitol Hill for ratification of the GATT agreement that would create the WTO. Perhaps this explains the praise for Mr. Cobb at a May 25 speech at the Heritage Foundation by Clinton Trade Representative Mickey Kantor.

It is interesting to note that, though all the major news outlets were given detailed evidence of Cobb's pilfering, only *Time*, in its June 13 issue, even mentioned the incident. But instead of exploring the implications of the story like a good muckraker—what this says about the GOP, our one-party state, the duplicity that passes for scholarship and diplomacy—*Time* smoothed over this terrain with a two-sentence summary, which was barely more informative than its headline, "Conservative Copycats."

The improprieties of the heroes and institutions of the Beltway are often treated with kid gloves by the Establishment press, treated more like household squabbles best kept among family than news stories that the hicks of the hinterlands need to hear about. This certainly was the case with Martin Luther King's plagiarisms, and the silence and political spin on this story continue to this day.

Professor Garry Wills of Northwestern University devotes an entire chapter to King and to an exegesis of the "I Have a Dream" speech in his latest book, *Certain Trumpets: The Call of Leaders*. Relying heavily on the research and conclusions of Keith "voice merging" Miller of the University of Arizona, Wills admits that "the most famous of [King's] perorations comes from another man, from Archibald Carey," but he assures us that "what is important . . . is not where King got it but what he did with it." What Wills does not say is that King principally plagiarized "white sources"—the work of liberal white writers, white preachers, white scholars—but that in the case of his most famous speech, King robbed, copyrighted, and defended his legal "right" to the words and thoughts of another black man. The press and the academy have always assumed that, because all blacks are alike, all blacks think alike, and all blacks backed the civil rights movement, Archibald Carey—ipso facto—felt honored to have his words stolen by someone of the stature of King. This may have been the case, but no evidence of this has ever been offered. The speech by Carey that caught King's attention was given, after all, at the Republican National Convention of 1952, not the Democratic Convention of 1960.

Moreover, black leaders have long complained that the white community, and the white legal system in particular, ignores the problem of black-on-black crime, that when black victims are involved it refuses to uphold the same laws and standards that apply to whites. But where is the black outrage at the patronizing community of liberal white scholars who continue this ignominy in cultural affairs? Fighting cruel indifference on the one hand—in the social and political realms—while encouraging benign neglect on the other—in the cultural and academic—is hardly the best strategy for battling double standards.

To Wills' credit, he does boldly condemn King's "academic" plagiarisms:

> Normal as this kind of borrowing was among preachers, it is inexcusable in academic terms, and I believe [King's] doctorate should be rescinded by Boston University. (I also think John Kennedy's Pulitzer Prize, won in an even greater exercise of false pretense [for *Profiles in Courage*, which Theodore Sorensen and his aides principally composed] should be rescinded—for one

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thing this would make judges of prizes and examiners of doctoral students more conscientious at their work.)

The reader will not, however, find this passage in Wills' chapter-long paean to King: he buried this at the end of the book in a long footnote on pages 311 and 312. But if Wills did this in propitiation for his sin of candor, the literary elite and the fourth estate were unimpressed. As Frank Kermode whined in the *New York Times Book Review*, Wills "doesn't even suggest a posthumous honorary doctorate [for King] in its place."

A university unafraid to condemn a plagiarized thesis and to rescind a fraudulently earned degree is Oxford University. As the London *Daily Telegraph* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported in April, Oxford's Trinity College has revoked the 1986 doctorate of historian Gary Owen Hughes because he plagiarized his dissertation from one written at Princeton. This is reportedly only the second time this century that Oxford has rescinded a degree because of plagiarism. "I had been surprised by the great improvement in Gary's work," said don Jack Pole, "but I suppose I attributed this to my teaching." Impressed with what the *Inquirer* called his "pearl-like diction" (British accent?) and "golden" credentials, Temple University had hired Hughes and brought him to the United States in 1987 to help write its multivolume *Biographical Dictionary of Early Pennsylvania Legislators*, but he was fired the next year when the university discovered that a number of his articles had been scissor-and-pasted together from cabbaged work. Unsurprisingly, other works plagiarized by Hughes have been discovered since his firing, both here and in England. It is debatable which is most disturbing: Hughes's many thefts, the academy's silence on this story since 1988, or the fact that the best person for writing a state's colonial history is not only not an American, but a Brit.

It may appear from these examples that our "Age of Plagiarism," as Andrei Navrozov in the *London Times* recently termed our day, comprises only students of the humanities and social sciences, but the "other culture" continues to contribute its fair share. The June 1993 conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, for example, was devoted entirely to "Plagiarism and Theft of Ideas." The notorious dispute between two epidemiologists at the University of Hong Kong finally resulted this winter, after seven years of litigation costing 16 million Hong Kong dollars (2.1 million American dollars), in what *Nature* magazine called "the world's first legal verdict in which a scientist has been found guilty of plagiarism." The case involved the plagiarizing of a questionnaire that a team of scientists had developed for researching lung cancer in female nonsmokers. "Success or failure of a study depends on the quality of the questionnaire," said researcher Takeshi Hirayama.

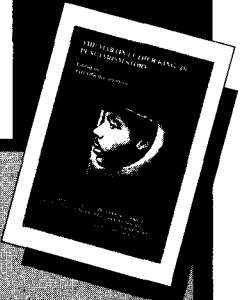
Considering the cut-throat climate in which scientific research is now conducted, Mr. Hirayama is absolutely right. Washington attorney Barbara Mishkin, who often deals with cases of scientific fraud and plagiarism, said in a recent issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that "collegiality among scientists has been lost, especially among those in fast-paced fields where scientific breakthroughs produce not only moments of glory but also the potential for commercially valuable products. Collaboration and communication among peers often have been replaced by competition and mistrust." In light of the ongoing scandal involving Dr. Bernard Fisher of the University of Pittsburgh—who took an "arrogant and cavalier attitude," according to a U.S. House committee, toward falsified data in a federally financed study of breast cancer treatments—one might think that faked research is more prevalent than plagiarism in the sciences. But Marcel LaFollette in *Stealing into Print: Fraud, Plagiarism, and Misconduct in Scientific Publishing* (1992) says that "the NSF [National Science Foundation] and NIH [National Institutes of Health] now report that they investigate substantially more allegations involving plagiarism and stolen ideas than allegations involving falsified or altered data."

Ms. Mishkin, however, predicts better days ahead and believes fraud and plagiarism can be combated by teaching conflict-resolution theory to university administrators. The specific program she celebrates was designed by . . . Boston University. What commentators like Ms. Mishkin refuse to consider is that dishonesty and duplicity are not problems of management—not cause for improving the counselor-to-student ratio, not signals that our organizational skills need honing nationwide—but rather signs of an ominous trait in our country's moral character that no academic seminar could possibly eradicate. Though this is the last thing our therapeutic state's minions want to hear, the problem of fraud and plagiarism is like the old joke about the man stabbed in the back. "Sure, I can remove the knife," the doctor tells the patient. "But I think you have a deeper problem."

Dante understood these "deeper problems," and it is because he understood them that he chose the formidable monster Geryon to represent fraud and to rule the falsifiers, thieves, and "all such filthy cheats" in the darker and deeper recesses of Hell. He held special disdain for miscreants of this sort because, unlike gluttons and hoarders and other persons guilty of mere incontinence, these sinners had perverted the divine gift of intelligence by which man can discover truth and used it to deceive for temporal gain. However, weaned not on the *Divine Comedy* but on Slim-Fast reform, we believe rectitude and redemption are only phone calls away, that issues of character can be solved by committee, and that with hugs, 12-step programs, and conflict-resolution theory, there is a quick anodyne for every social and personal ill. For understanding plagiarists and forgers, adulterers and murderers, and the many other transgressors of our secular hell, it is clear where we now search for wisdom and truth. Donahue and Dear Abby, not Dante, shine the way. ©

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., PLAGIARISM STORY

Edited by Theodore Pappas



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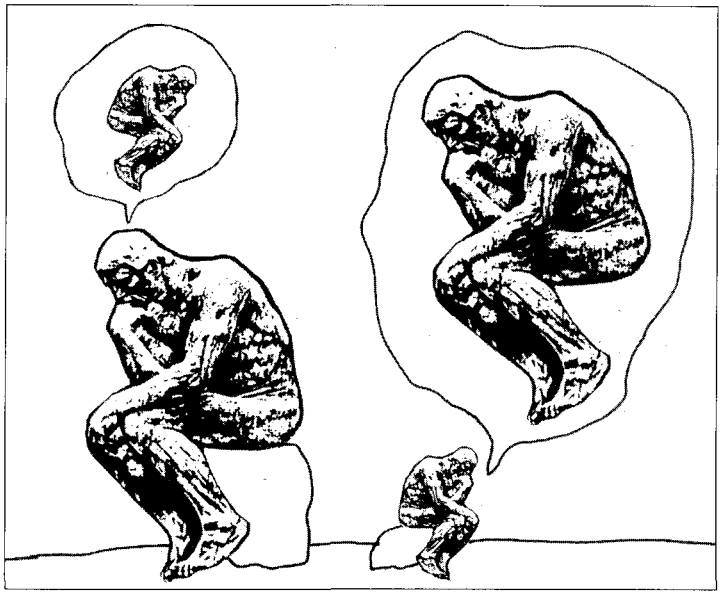
The Politics of Education and the Metaphysics of Emptiness

by Stephen A. Erickson



Igor Kopelnitsky

The president of a prominent liberal arts college recently conveyed to its philosophy department (and to other constituencies) that regulations may soon be in place which would influence, if not altogether control, the conferring of bachelor's degrees. Mandated by the federal government, these "guidelines" would have a strongly utilitarian bias. However supportive this might be to the sciences and the social sciences (chemistry and economics, for example) it is likely to harm the humanities. These (as of late, curiously self-destructive) disciplines are likely to contract, perhaps even shrink, both in size and in influence.

This should not surprise us. Sputnik alarmed the country about its global military competitiveness, rather irrationally sweeping the humanities along with the hard sciences into what was quantitatively an educational boom. A rising tide is said to lift all boats, and the educational bull market of the post-Sputnik era made advanced degrees in any and every field common and plentiful commodities, compromising excellence in the process and, rather tragically, breaking many an aspiring academic job applicant's heart. Especially in the humanities, supply rather quickly and devastatingly outstripped demand, and this when it had already long been unclear what needs the supply was meant to meet. Were these needs merely institutional, or were they in some deeper sense educational, or even metaphysical?

Now in the 90's, the terrors of a lingering, largely white-collar recession and a quiet but growing anxiety over foreign influence in our capital markets have sounded a different call. In the name of enhanced global economic competitiveness, the trumpet sounds educational retreat, best known as curricular retrenchment and restructuring, and where else first to downsize than in the humanities, where bread is neither baked nor even much eaten anymore but is mostly theorized about as a possible object of production and consumption—if, that is, it were prepared by previously "marginalized" and gastronomically and politically correct bakers, 40-some percent of whom are to be women and about 30 percent non-Euroamerican. Ingredients themselves are to be gathered from previously "oppressed" sources (and by previously oppressed gatherers), and their gathering must be environmentally nondisruptive and sexually nondiscriminating. In these requirements, incidentally, there may be some genuine virtues, but in the meantime little bread is getting baked and even less is reaching any student's table, except, that is, as an example of a kind of bread that is not to be preferred over any other.

Somewhat separately from the college president's all too easily confirmable message, something slightly less visible has also been happening in the humanistic bakery and, more importantly, on those administrative drawing boards where humanistic bakeries are now being remodeled and their staffing reconsidered. In accelerating increments, value-oriented discussions are receding from view in the academy, getting discouraged if not subtly punished. It is not hard, though no less painful, to understand why. Such discussions often imply choices based upon evaluations of better and worse, commendable and contemptible, promising and pointless, or even the more truncated Nietzschean categories of life-enhancing and life-denying. And these discussions are invariably guided by deep commitments to first principles and to ultimates. These latter are seldom adjudicable through further "argument," though they are often illuminated and even transformed in the clash of perspectives and convictions. At such "clash points" serious dialogue must ensue; much is put at risk, and much also ends up devalued, if not rejected. But in an environment where power and "empowerment" are themselves

Stephen A. Erickson is a professor of humanities and philosophy at Pomona College.

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construed as ultimate values, and less advantaged power groups transitionally mask themselves in the cloak of nonjudgmental multiculturalism, value discussion is itself unavoidably discouraged. (Those having grabbed the best seats, if only by default or by successful ascription of inherited guilt to others, find nothing to gain in any further discussion of the seating arrangements, and therefore they do their best either to ignore or to outlaw such discussions.)

Value discussion, which almost always involves rejection as well as choice, tends to be counterproductive, even destructive, with respect to power's preservation, for value discussion demystifies such power, asking the why of its accumulation, the ends of its potential deployments. Such discussion subsumes, if not often debunks, some of power's aspirants for their relative intellectual poverty. If I do not feel good about myself or my group, telling me that there is good reason for me to feel bad—a feeling which itself is construed in many educational quarters as an early sign both of awareness and of hope—can only further diminish my self-respect, my sense of empowerment and of status. We have now moved from the intellectually relativistic position that every point of view is "valid in its own way" to the paralyzing dogma that every cultural production is on the same footing with every other. Add to this brew the asphyxiating conviction that whatever has seemingly advanced beyond its cultural rivals must have done so unfairly through economic "privilege" and should be unmasked and then excoriated for its misbegotten cultural dominance, and you have a picture of cultural socialism being played out in the name of tolerance. Neither sports teams nor businesses operate in this manner, nor is it a method by which medical, aviational, or personal decisions are made, and if it bespeaks the educational future, perhaps the humanities are best abolished altogether. Hosting a convention of plague victims may enhance the city's revenues in the short term, but soon that same city will surely perish, victim of its own success.

In higher education nowadays two factors are in play. The less dangerous of the two has to do with our economic competitiveness and the basic abilities of our work force. Here, reading comprehension and computer literacy are undoubtedly of more importance than understanding Athenian democracy or the open couplet. Plato, Jung, and the Hindus have claimed, as have numerous others, that it is usually after the age of 18 that the "big" questions find fertile soil. Though it may well be that the ground must be cultivated early and regularly if any crops are later to grow, the college president's report on utilitarian bias may serve a useful purpose, directing students toward the more immediate mysteries of label and direction reading and comprehension and drawing them back from Derridean deconstruction or from those depressing social histories of still one further dimension of the commonplace. Utilitarian bias may shrivel the soul, but it may be worse to bloat it irremediably with empty sophistications, especially if it is already mystified by such basics as complex sentence construction and the fundamentals of the card catalogue system in the library.

Worker-proficiency is supposedly related to a party our country allegedly held and now has to pick up after. Deficit status, trade balance, dollar strength, and so on are all taken as measures of underlying economic health, and, it is argued, by these very measures too much has been eaten and drunk, whether an actual party has been thrown or not. In any case a cleaning crew is needed, a somewhat self-sacrificing one at that, and the more competent and efficient it is, the quicker its work will be accomplished. The irony of our metaphysical poverty is that for many the cleanup's only purpose is to enable some future generation to have a life similar to the one after which our younger generations are now being asked to pick up. Something is surely wrong.

But there is more, and this brings me to the second and more explosive factor in the educational condominium, the factor which has been much at the heart of multiculturalism. This second factor might be described as an educational version of the trickle-down theory. And what does this mean? To be economically competitive the United States must function to some considerable degree as a cooperative unit, as a team, so to speak. This is at best difficult, and increasingly so, for we are progressively a country of separating and growing ethnicities, particularities with clout and aspiration, particularities wanting both larger pieces of the pie and insulation and protection from each other's competitive claims. How is this to be accomplished? The underlying educational theory is that an elite of the college-educable among diverse ethnicities, if brought together to understand each other's cultures and to live in conversational proximity to each other, will form a kind of multicultural vanguard, not just of tolerance but of appreciation, and this will trickle down to the less educated over time and become common wisdom. Further, as more and more representatives of each differing ethnicity get prominent and well-rewarded positions in society, those ethnic groups will become more positively visible, more integrated into what might be called an emerging multicultural mainstream. And they are likely, too, regardless of their ethnicity, to be less resentful, thus less potentially destructive, of the productively privileged members of the society as a whole, regardless of *their* ethnicity.

Obviously, no one knows the long-term outcome of the application of this educational theory, though few social-engineering projects seem to have had more than a modest and often cataclysmically reversible success. In the short term this theory will surely create chaos and violence, and a great deal of resentment will be engendered in those groups who feel themselves being displaced, having to give way to the demands of various emerging and insistent minorities. It will require, as do virtually all social-engineering projects, what the Czech writer Milan Kundera calls the "organizing forgetting" of much of American history. The communists themselves, as cunning and ruthless as any amnesia salesman could possibly be, found that this could not be sustained. Whether the American educational establishment will have any better fortune is doubtful, for they lack both the hardness and the clear sense of (hallucinated) outcome that supported the various communist nomenclatures for so long.

One final word on these tangled social-engineering issues. We know that forced busing did not work, was in fact a miserable failure. But we also know that for the current educational theory to have a chance, for it in fact to be tested, something other than what is now happening would have to occur. To give an example, it would be precisely the non-African-Americans who would have to study black culture, for in this might be found the expansion of understanding, and perhaps even appreciation and critical respect. As it is, with each ethnic claimant seeking an impregnable basis from which to reflect appreciatively upon itself, little can be accomplished beyond a kind of solipsistically driven balkanization. It is not only Leib-

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nizean monads, we are now discovering, that lack windows.

More than once I have referred to the metaphysical, implying its absence *from* contemporary educational discussion. The wonderful German word *Armutszeugnis* might best be translated as "confession of inner poverty," and surely this describes the intellectual future engineered for us by the educational bureaucrats. A little over 200 years ago the philosopher Kant posited three questions central to being human—What can I know? What ought I do? And for what may I hope?—and found their integration possible in terms of one terse but synoptic query: What is man? From Kant's view, these questions and their pursuit were unavoidable and, however finally impossible of consummation, certified our humanity.

Times have surely changed. If Nietzsche's announcement of God's demise provided a dramatic opportunity to usher out the theological from professional educational debate, Freud's remark to Marie Bonaparte that such questions as Kant's were themselves symptomatic of illness encouraged the emptying of the metaphysical arena altogether. Now reflections regarding the meaning and ends of human life are shelved with such relics as phrenology and phlogiston theory and paid the same patronizing anthropological courtesy: "Once people thought. . . . How charmingly quaint! It was not known in those times that . . . ."

But this does not mean that the Kantian questions were magically suspended. No, in governmentally encouraged, professional educational planning groups they have been largely answered, if only by myopic (though politically correct) default. Students in particular—thus, the "future"—can know that, however similar, human beings are different, but in their difference they are really "the same," their activities and creations valuable in a manner not subject to evaluation. Given these epistemological insights, ethics can be truly diverse in its affirmation of everything: everyone ought equally to empower everyone else, thereby raising the level of self-esteem in a manner that neither lifts nor separates anyone (or anything) from any other, thereby avoiding the implications of rank, accomplishment, excellence, or exclusion. (If political socialism was criticized for requiring too many evening meetings, cultural socialism will likely be charged with engendering too many sleepy afternoons.) The grand hope in all this is that a sufficiently large pie might eventually be baked (and celebrated) so that all may effortlessly and in equal measure devour it, in the process acknowledging that all ingredients, and the ensuing result, are technologically sound, culturally diverse, but indistinguishable in value from other ingredients which might have been used. The consumption of this pie, advertised on a home-shopping network, is what *it* is "all about"—life, that is.

And what, then, is "man"? The one-dimensional, profane, and cozily materialistic parameters now circumscribing this question, their seductive secularism and lazy, largely mid- to low-brow aestheticism, render it too depressing to pursue. Under these circumstances Prozac may prove salvific, at least for those scattered souls not completely manipulated, indoctrinated, and ultimately numbed by this paltry vision.

Rescue often arrives from the least favorable of sources, and such it may well be for the coming night in which all creations (and creatures, even) are altogether "correct." The college president mentioned at the beginning of this essay spoke of utilitarian biases in the service of global economic competitiveness. If cultural socialism, the gradual extinction of the discriminate, implies passively acquired esteem, economic restructuring and enhancement demand actively pursued, mostly measurable results. They require skill, energy, efficiency, and discrimination of the highest order, however humanistically impoverished. The collision of these prerequisites with the political directives embedded in a currently unfocused "trickle-down" multiculturalism will likely engender a conflict unholy in nature and unholy to watch. If one side prevails, we replay the late stages of the Roman Empire; if the other, we experience brisk philistinism not dissimilar to the best of an aliterate public works administration, staffed by willing, though intellectually and spiritually sanitized, technicians.

The important issue is whether a space can be discovered or engendered, a locus for transcendence, in which questions regarding what might really matter could again become unavoidable—and not just for the few. Were this to happen, everyday life, education, and the journey of the (much neglected) human soul might confront one another in a manner both painful and saving. The current metaphysics of emptiness would selectively dissolve, and the politics of education would join Alice in Blunderland. Our spirits might again receive continuing and even, occasionally, public sustenance.

Barring this outcome, it is hard to imagine any hope aside from strategies of withdrawal. Has the loud noise of the educational world drowned out those necessary silences in which wisdom and character grow? Might the strength, the courage, and the unblinking compassion paradoxically required for discriminate judgment then be nurtured in small, separated communities? Ours may now and finally be the time for the reemergence of a late-Hellenistic retreat and renewal. Surely the metaphysics and politics of our current day offer no plausible alternative.

History Is Not Finished

by Peter Russell

I wonder, is there any sense at all
Either in what they say or what they do
My own life's absolutely senseless too
An endless waiting for the bombs to fall
Not only on the crowd beyond the wall
(Who hardly count) but on *our* mindless crew.
Here and *now*,—and that means me and you
The wall's set down—it's moving at our call.

We are the ones drawing the noose around us
The barbarians are massing day by day
In search of shelter, money, food and work
And like a moving wall will soon surround us
Nothing we do can keep these hordes away
The TV newsmen wear a nasty smirk.

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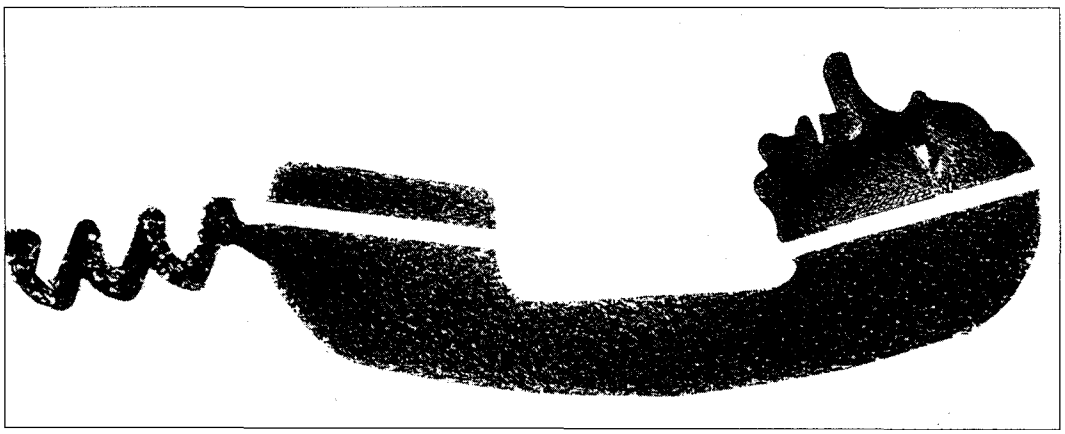
Go Figure

by Arnold Beichman

"A politician . . . one that would circumvent God."
—William Shakespeare



Igor Kopelnitsky

Nixon: A Life
by Jonathan Aitken
Washington, D.C.:
Regnery Publishing;
633 pp., $28.00

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In preparing my review of this riveting biography, I gathered samples of what has recently been written about Richard M. Nixon, and I must say they make a bewildering collection. Here are a few:

"A monster of a million disguises." Andrew Kopkind, the *Nation*.

"A chief executive who had gone off the rails." The *Economist*.

". . . a visionary along the lines of a Woodrow Wilson." Robert Scheer, the *Nation*.

". . . the most innovative and successful foreign policy president of the 20th century." Jonathan Aitken, the *Economist*.

". . . one of the most hated—perhaps the single most hated—of the political figures in the United States over the past half century." Thomas Sowell, *Forbes* magazine.

". . . he earned the special affection and admiration of U.S. conservatism without even significantly advancing their cause." William Buckley, *National Review*.

". . . Nixon probably produced the most deft and creative foreign policy performance by a president in this century." *U.S. News*.

". . . [he built] appeasement . . . into detente. . . ." Theodore Draper, *Commentary*, 1976.

In three presidential elections—1960, 1968, 1972—Nixon received more ballots than anyone else in American history: 113 million. For trivia *aficionados*, this item: in 42 years, Nixon got 56 *Time* and 54 *Newsweek* magazine covers. In his 20 years of exile, he wrote nine best-sellers and achieved a global status that no other living ex-President—Bush, Carter, Ford, or Reagan—can begin to match. On the other hand, he picked in 1968 a bribe-taker for the vice presidency, one who later pleaded guilty to federal income tax evasion. In 1960, he had offered the vice presidential nomination to Nelson Rockefeller; when Rockefeller turned it down, he gave the nomination to Henry Cabot Lodge. A bad track record on vice presidential candidates for so experienced a politician.

Let me confuse the Nixon image even more. Recall the 1960 presidential election in which John F. Kennedy received 34.2 million (49.7 percent) and Nixon 34.1 million (49.6 percent) votes. The margin between the two candidates was 112,881, less than one-tenth of one percent of the total. There was evidence of electoral fraud in Illinois, Texas, New Mexico, and Missouri. Despite the evidence, Nixon rejected the advice of friends and allies to demand a recount. In the event, his inaction gave the election result a legitimacy it would have

Arnold Beichman is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and author, most recently, of Anti-American Myths: Their Causes and Consequences.

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lacked if he had demanded a recount. Tom Wicker wrote these long-forgotten sentences in the *New York Times*: "Nobody knows to this day whom the American people really elected President in 1960. Under the prevailing system John F. Kennedy was inaugurated but it was not at all clear if this was really the will of the people, or, if so, by what means and margin that will was expressed."

In reading the Aitken biography I made no deliberate attempt to compare it with previous biographies, such as the three volumes by Stephen E. Ambrose. This book is unique because Nixon gave the author, a British M.P., 60 hours of interviews and opened up private archives, letters and diaries, personal and family papers for his unrestricted use. No other biographer had such access, including 135 interviews with almost everybody who was ever involved with Nixon. This is biography not hagiography, although Aitken makes no attempt to conceal his admiration for Nixon. Interestingly, there is one person whom he did not interview—Henry Kissinger. Why not? The author, who is biting in his assessment of the former Secretary of State, does not explain this singular omission from his list of interviewees.

The overwhelming—and probably unanswerable—question that emerges from his massive tome is this: How could somebody as smart as Nixon have so shafted himself as to end up in disgrace, the only President in our history who resigned rather than face impeachment and probable removal from office? There can be no question that had Nixon opened up after the arrest of the Watergate burglars in 1972 instead of participating in the coverup, or had he destroyed the incriminating tapes as soon as the cancer on the presidency began to metastasize, he would have served out his second term. So why didn't he do either? Was there something in Nixon's character that drove him to make colossal errors, allowing a nincompoop like John Dean to act as counsel to the President of the United States? Appointing to the Supreme Court two judges who couldn't possibly have won a Senate confirmation vote and then ending up with Harry Blackmun as the compromise? Permitting the Daniel Ellsberg burglary? Ordering the CIA to block an FBI probe into Watergate? Running a losing race for governor of California?

Aitken, who knew Nixon from 1966 on, talks about "dark corners" in Nixon's mental world, the "dark" side of his nature, a man who followed his "worst instincts." He says Kissinger "knew how to exploit Nixon's darker nature because he had one of his own." Aitken comes very close to blaming the former Secretary of State for Nixon's downfall. He indicts Kissinger for maintaining Nixon's confidence in him "by dubious methods . . . pandering to Nixon's worst instincts with cunning sycophancy." Nixon was so troubled by Kissinger's mood swings that he "at one stage considered whether this National Security Adviser should seek psychiatric care."

Matters got so bad between them that Nixon told Charles Colson to order the Secret Service to tap Kissinger's calls. There is a remarkable piece of dialogue when Colson reports to the President the contents of a Kissinger phone call to Joseph Kraft. Aitken believes that what saved Kissinger from dismissal was Watergate. Yet on page 520, he reports that in his preresignation conferences with Vice President Ford, Nixon "emphasized that Henry Kissinger was *indispensable* as Secretary of State" (italics added). Go figure.

Aitken recounts that Kissinger was ready to resign at the height of the Watergate scandal after Nixon appointed General Alexander Haig to succeed H.R. Haldeman as White House Chief of Staff. Kissinger took umbrage at the idea of having to report to Haig, his former assistant, and arranged to see Nixon to hand in his resignation. Before Kissinger entered the Oval Office, Rose Mary Woods, Nixon's secretary, delivered a diatribe to the Secretary of State that ended with this line: "For once in your life, Henry, just behave like a man." Kissinger entered the Oval Office and never mentioned resignation.

Who was "Deep Throat," the highly placed individual who told all to the *Washington Post* team of Woodward and Bernstein? It is remarkable in a capital city where nothing is a secret for more than a day that the identity of this informer is still a question. What does Aitken think? Here I will insist that, because of the many interviews Nixon granted him, Aitken's theories are also Nixon's theories. Aitken focuses his Deep Throat hypothesis on one of the unsolved mysteries of the Watergate drama: the 18 and one-half minute gap in the White House tapes that Ms. Woods was transcribing. Only six people had known of the erasure when Deep Throat leaked the story about "deliberate erasures" to the Woodstein duo. The six were: Nixon; Ms. Woods; Haig; Fred Buzhardt, White House counsel; Steve Bull, who replaced Alexander Butterfield, the man who told the Senate investigators about the White House taping system; and Haig's deputy, Major General John C. Bennett. Eliminate the first two—Nixon and Woods—since they wouldn't leak stories about themselves. That leaves four possible *Washington Post* informants. Libel laws and lack of definite proof prevent Aitken from voicing his—or Nixon's—suspicion. I have long been persuaded that in actual fact there is no *one* Deep Throat but several persons whom Woodstein have elided into a single individual to prevent any personal identification.

Little space remains for a discussion of Nixon's foreign and domestic policies, and there isn't much good to say about any of them, despite Aitken's Cheeryble-like attitude. On the domestic scene, Nixon talked conservative while pursuing politics that would have done Jimmy Carter or Bill Clinton proud—wage and price controls in peacetime and the expansion of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society social programs, family assistance, affirmative action orders, budgetary deficits, etc. As for foreign policy, with the fall of the Soviet Empire the subject may be moot, since all sides in the debate can claim credit for theunexpected achievement. There is no question in my mind that Nixon's *détente* amounted to appeasement of the Soviet Union, of communist China—and of the Council on Foreign Relations and similarly minded American liberals.

Perhaps the last word ought to be given to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, now back in his Russian homeland. Critical of *détente*, he identified what he called the "Kissinger syndrome," whereby "individuals, while holding high office, pursue a policy of appeasement and capitulation . . . but immediately upon retirement the scales fall from their eyes and they begin to advocate firmness and resolution. How can this be? What caused the change? Enlightenment just doesn't come that suddenly! Might we not assume that they were well aware of the real state of affairs all along, but simply drifted with the political tide, clinging to their posts?"

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Father Abraham

by Brenan R. Nierman

The Last Best Hope of Earth: Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America
by Mark E. Neely, Jr.
Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 214 pp., $24.95

◆

It now appears that the safest way for scholars to treat Abraham Lincoln is in discrete segments of his life, leaving it to other, perhaps braver, souls to draw the appropriate conclusions. This means that, as in this book which focuses on the presidential years, modern Lincoln scholarship seems to miss the essence of the man in all his complexity. A man and his actions are of course inseparable, but the significance of the clues to Lincoln's character that Mark Neely offers us seems to escape the author's own recognition. For instance, Neely makes note of Lincoln's Enlightenment-laden rationalism, so evident in his 1838 Young Men's Lyceum address, but leaves the question as to what we may infer from the fact largely unexplored. Given the revolutionary zeal with which some of Lincoln's later allies would prosecute his war of empire and utopia, however, the connections beg to be made.

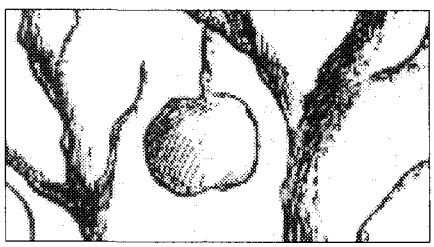
For all that, this book is over a century late; had it been made available to the disenfranchised and defeated Confederates of the Reconstruction South, doubtless much of the pain of losing their homes, their land, and their culture would have been eased by the knowledge that their fortunes had been entrusted to the "last best hope of earth." And if Father Abraham's current intellectual heirs, panting at the chance to proclaim democracy unto all the world, have their way, soon other peoples will have the experience of joy and peace that once so pervaded Dixie.

Perhaps the greatest flaw of Mark Neely's biography is that it is a remarkably flat portrait of one of the most perplexing and talented men of any age. That is not to say, of course, that Lincoln was a great statesman. Robert Johannsen has shown, in his *Lincoln, the South, and Slavery*, just how much Lincoln manipulated the sharpest issue of his time for his own political benefit. The consequence, of course, was not just an ambitious lawyer in the catbird seat, but our bloodiest war. Neely's words make the point:

> It would be very difficult to characterize the Republican party as anything but a sectional party, offering nothing to the white South and, in the speeches of most party members, making political capital out of antisouthernism. Abraham Lincoln was a good Republican, and his ideal of nationalism looked forward to an American nation based entirely on northern free-soil principles.
>
> Lincoln's vagueness about the eventual "extinction" of slavery . . . was perhaps the most intellectually dishonest part of his platform. Neither he nor any other anti-Nebraska politician much wanted to deal with the question of race.

So Lincoln ran for President, said nothing to allay the fears of an already-alarmed South during the summer months of 1860, was elected, and found, to his surprise and dismay, that the South was prepared to take some of his more vocal supporters at their word. If limiting slavery was the key, as Lincoln said it was, to its eventual abolition, then even this would be too much. For slavery in the South was part of the larger cultural complex of Old Whig-Jeffersonian republicanism that insisted on the necessity of the agrarian life to shape the free, self-controlled, virtuous men so vital to the life of the Republic. If the agrarian life were threatened, this belief held, then the Old Republic would be in mortal danger. Lincoln was the focal point of that threat in 1860; and, sure enough, time has proved that the men who bade a fond farewell to union were, in their analysis of the problem, essentially correct. Lincoln destroyed a cultural system upon which the finer points of the Old Republic depended, substituting in its stead the rationalistic cash nexus, the atomistic individual, and the imperial presidency.

In the process, the old concept of virtue as self-disciplined adherence to the ideals of the moral imagination, personified in General Robert E. Lee, gradually gave way to an aggressive new order of idyllic self-righteousness, in which virtue is pursued in the collective worship of an abstract, rootless humanity. We can detect the tones of this distorted piety in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural. The results of these rhetorical morality binges are yet unfolding before our eyes in the daily paper. It was, of course, all done (and is still being done) in the name of democracy; and it is, as I have said, a great shame that Lincoln's soothing words of secularized religiosity were not more widely known to the victims of his messianic largesse.



Lincoln was a master of many things. He was a good lawyer, a fine politician, and a resolute Commander-in-Chief. As his legacy to his countrymen, however, Abraham Lincoln left not just the honied vision of a Crolier-than-thou Progressivism, but the promise of a future Caesar who, in his pursuit of the main chance, would imitate his predecessor by stopping at nothing to win his place on a marble throne in Washington, D.C. Lincoln's rhetoric guaranteed that, for as long as his Union of force continues, paeans will be sung to equality, varying in both tone and melody but growing ever more shrill. Those brilliant high-toned notes of immanentized eschatology, cloaked as they were in a Kentucky-fried coating of biblical prose, serve now, as they served then, as the rallying cry for every new generation of ignoramuses who seek with starry eyes to begin anew and who invoke the name—the now magical name—of Father Abraham.

Brenan R. Nierman recently earned his Ph.D. in government at Georgetown University.

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Real Jews

by Gerald Russello

Conservative, American & Jewish: I Wouldn't Have It Any Other Way
by Jacob Neusner
Lafayette, Louisiana: Huntington House; 232 pp., $9.99

A Jewish Conservative Looks at Pagan America
by Don Feder
Lafayette, Louisiana: Huntington House; 238 pp., $9.99

I Shot an Elephant in My Pajamas: The Morrie Ryskind Story
by Morrie Ryskind, with John H. Roberts
Lafayette, Louisiana: Huntington House; 238 pp., $12.99

◆

Exploration of the relationship between Jews and America is far from complete, at least among Jewish conservatives, who do not rely on their religious traditions as explicitly as do some among the Christian right. There has been some speculation in Jewish circles that the reason Jews in America have prospered is because both Judaism and the United States are founded upon ideas: Judaism, this theory contends, is based on monotheism as America is based on freedom. Though perhaps true, this contention is only a partial explanation of either Judaism or America. Of all the major world religions, few could be said to be more rooted in history and memory than Judaism. The history of the Jews is, after all, a history of the relationship of a people with its God and of the conviction that God has prepared a place for His chosen people. To reduce the ritual order and historical consciousness of the Jewish religion to a bland devotion is a disservice, and to minimize the importance of America's concrete history in the development of its political institutions, which grew out of a definite Common Law tradition, is likewise a distortion of the record. Such an understanding of Judaism and America opens the way for ideology; a zealous attachment to abstract principles leads one to occlude the historical perspective.

Jacob Neusner's book is a collection of previously published articles that discusses the usual topics of conservative interest: education, culture, the role of religion in American life, etc. Neusner is conscious of the allure of ideology to those who ignore the teachings of their faith; in *Conservative, American & Jewish*, he reflects on the lack of religiosity among Jewish neoconservatives and faults other Jewish conservatives (especially those connected with the journal *Commentary*) for treating religion instrumentally, concluding that for this reason their conservatism remains unfulfilled.

Feder sounds a similar note in his new collection of columns, concentrating not so much on the neoconservatives as on the Jewish liberals who have forfeited true faith for the lures of false gods. For Jews, following the *Zeitgeist* should not be a sign of piety; rather their witness is meant to be countercultural, giving evidence of a higher order. In a meditation on the meaning of Yom Kippur to Jews living in a secular culture, Feder speaks of the concern Judaism has for both the individual and the community. Individuals are responsible for their own actions, surely; yet the larger culture needs reformation as well, for although it is a composite of the discrete actions of its members, it has an existence apart from them. To preserve a culture from death, conversion of both the individual and the nation is required.

While convinced of the generally beneficial effects of a free market and democracy, Feder does not base a conservative philosophy on these phenomena, which in the long history of humanity are ephemeral. Instead, he proposes a conservatism that is "God-centered, premised on a passion to nurture the best in human nature, which flows from our acceptance of divine injunctions. It is based on the ethical worldview of the patriarchs and prophets, grounded in the heritage of a people who first taught humanity to think in moral terms." This is an authentic conservatism, confronting the *status quo* and all the sins to which humanity is heir while holding up to it the ethical standards that arise from a concrete tradition. These standards are society's proper measure. While Feder sometimes descends into the ranks of the "statistic conservatives," who are content to lament our decline by quoting the latest figures of abortions and broken families, his view of reality is grounded in sound premises regarding human nature and the source of its fulfillment.

Morrie Ryskind's autobiography is by contrast an entertaining romp through the Broadway and Hollywood of the 1930's and 1940's, where everyone seemed to know everyone else and anti-communism was the only criterion for conservative status. Although raised in a Jewish home where he learned Yiddish as a first language and was given a classical education (he gave his high school commencement address in Greek), Ryskind

LIBERAL ARTS

WATER SPORTS

More than a dozen youths beat four lifeguards when they tried to clear a pool in Milwaukee to rescue a swimmer having a seizure, reported the *Chicago Tribune* last summer. While the seizure victim was fine, a 22-year-old male lifeguard had to seek medical attention for a bruised jaw. One lifeguard, who is black, said the attacks may have been racially motivated. The youths, all black, "started hitting all the white lifeguards," he said.

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seems to have borne some resemblance to the Jewish neoconservatives of a later era in his lack of interest in religion. Of course, *I Shot An Elephant* is not meant to be a theological treatise or statement of belief, but rather the story of an influential popular writer in a time when conservatives still had some say in the nation's cultural institutions. Ryskind is a great storyteller, and his autobiography is filled with accounts of his encounters with Ira and George Gershwin, the Marx Brothers, and other notables of the stage and screen. After some early successes at publishing light verse in Francis P. Adams' famous *Herald* column, "The Conning Tower," and an uncompleted stint at the Columbia School of Journalism, Ryskind made his life as a humorist and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1931 for the musical *Of Thee I Sing*.

Ryskind left Hollywood in 1948 after testifying for the House Un-American Activities Committee against the "Hollywood Ten," finding his services in the increasingly left-leaning industry no longer in demand. He began a new career as a political columnist and full-time supporter of Republican causes, starting with Taft in 1948 and continuing through 1980; indeed, the book closes with the visit the newly elected Ronald Reagan paid Ryskind just before his inauguration. Ryskind seems always to have been in the know, and as a result we get his observations on the political events and personalities of the last half-century, all suffused with a sharp wit and a ready appreciation for the ironies of life.

From Neusner, as befits a scholar, we get less wit than wisdom. His essays are written with an understanding eye toward the past, and it is clear that his faith is the lens through which he views the world. In one of his most penetrating essays—"Can Humanity Forget What It Knows?"—Neusner reflects on the very real possibility that even our advanced industrial society can lose whole realms of knowledge for no other reason than neglect and loss of purpose. As a counterpoint to our present methods of transmitting knowledge, Neusner presents the Talmud, a relatively compact guide to life that is centered around the discovery of truth and its passage from one generation to the next. We in the West have forgotten how to teach, and so our learning has become gradually irrelevant while the skills and knowledge painfully acquired over the centuries recede into an inaccessible past. The primary purpose of the institutions entrusted with teaching is to preserve and convey knowledge already gained to the next generation, not to generate "knowledge" that cannot be readily integrated into the existing cultural context.

Neusner, Feder, and Ryskind are three proud Americans who do not think that being a "real" Jew involves a disdain for their country and a preference for Israel. As Feder and Neusner point out, America has been good to the Jews—perhaps too good, since the soft tyranny of American consumerism threatens to commodify every aspect of Jewish culture capable of being transformed into profit and to discard the rest.

Gerald Russello writes from New York.

Back to the Future

by Christine Haynes

Destinations Past: Traveling through History with John Lukacs
by John Lukacs
Columbia: University of Missouri Press;
248 pp., $26.95

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Andrew Lytle, in his family memoir *A Wake for the Living*, compares the past to a foreign country. "If we dismiss the past as dead," he writes, "and not as a country of the living which our eyes are unable to see, as we cannot see a foreign country but know it is there, then we are likely to become servile." The value of *Destinations Past* lies in its author's ability to make both the past and the foreign come alive. The historian in John Lukacs leads him to recognize that "we travel in time as well as in space." His voyages—whether to England in 1965 for Winston Churchill's funeral, to Austria in 1989 for Adolf Hitler's 100th birthday, or to Hungary in 1990 for the first meeting of a new, freely elected parliament—are more than adventures; they are "contacts with history."

A collection of 21 essays published in various places (including *Chronicles*) over the last 40 years, *Destinations Past* follows Lukacs's train of thought as he journeys—literally or, as in the essay "Cook's Continental Timetable," only figuratively—from his home in eastern Pennsylvania to various spots in Europe: Venice, Austria, Switzerland, Andorra, London, Greece, Warsaw, Transylvania, Dresden, Budapest, and Scandinavia. It is a memoir not only of the places Lukacs has seen and the moments he has witnessed but of the feelings he has experienced as a Hungarian-born American revisiting the Old World. Lukacs was a young adult when he left Hungary to come to the United States in 1946, and his character had already been formed by the social and cultural structures of interbellum bourgeois Europe. But it was not until he had lived in the United States that he discovered his European identity. Reflecting on his exile status in the preface to this volume, Lukacs writes: "[I]t was in America that I learned much about Europe, and it was not until I had lived for some time in America that I found myself to be a European." Exiles (as Lloyd Kramer demonstrates in *Threshold of a New World: Intellectuals and the Exile Experience in Paris, 1830-1848*) gain a unique perspective on both their home country and their adopted one by uprooting themselves from familiar surroundings. Lukacs's dual identity has certainly heightened his sensitivity to cultural differences and positioned him to elucidate historical trends on both sides of the Atlantic.

His evocative language and astute observations recall great travel writers like Henry James, M.F.K. Fisher, Ford Madox Ford, and W. Somerset Maugham—all expatriates themselves at one time or another. His descriptive passages equal those of our best novelists. As example, the first essay in this collection, "Entering Venice" (1954), is reminiscent of Ernest Hemingway's *Across the River and Into the Trees* in its depiction of the marshy city. And his analysis of Churchill's name in "Three Days in London" (1965) is as perceptive as it is delightful:

> *Churchill*. How the very sound and shape of his name fitted him. Pouting, aristocratic, flecked by sunlight. The round and juicy sound of the first syllable, formed by lips curling to speak just as his, the air filling up the cheeks of a seventeenth-century boy with a young and churchy sound. . . . The pout merges, in a genial way, into

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the second syllable. There is nothing chilly about that final syllable, it is short, shiny, even brilliant, that springy sound of a rill. The sound of the full name is serious and humorous: it has a male charm about it: it is like the baroque fountains of Blenheim.

Lukacs's observations on other cultures also deserve praise—and quotation. Asides like "it is a good queue because it is an English queue, disciplined and good-natured, without jostling"; Warsaw's "poverty has a smell that is acrid, not sour, like the proud poverty of a woman erect in her old fur coat"; and "in the New World we are avaricious of time but spendthrifts of space" divulge much about the character of various peoples. His most profound insights, however, have to do with historical and political processes. He insists, for instance, on the difference between nationalism and patriotism, which "has marked some of the deepest rifts in the history of the twentieth century": nationalism, as exemplified by Hitler, is populist, extroverted, aggressive, and ideological; while patriotism is traditionalist, deeply rooted, introverted, and defensive. Lukacs also emphasizes that the age of bureaucracy, and not the age of democracy, has followed the age of aristocracy; even in Russia, he finds in 1976, bureaucracy and international Americanism have triumphed: rather than a corps of elite Ministers, "there are only Very Important Persons, Important Persons, Persons, and, somewhere in the Soviet lists perhaps, unpersons." Parallel (or is it perpendicular?) to this development, Lukacs sees a reassertion of deep national differences, which (as in Transylvania) have replaced communism and anticommunism as the driving force in world politics. As a result of these two trends, Lukacs concludes, "There are two cultures in the life of the world now. . . . One is international; the other is national. One is represented by the international language of the network of business, of technology, of conference centers, of sociological jargon, of computers, of telex, of airline and airport lingo; the other by the language of domestic life."

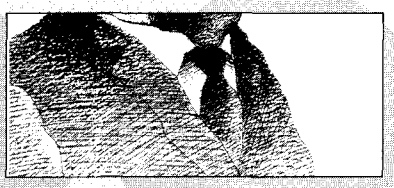
While none of Lukacs's comments about the modern world is invalid, some are more comical than others. Lukacs often uses humor to make a serious point. Germans seem to be a particular butt of his jokes, as when he writes, "All over Venice pigeons rose with the sun, and 30,000 German cameras in German hands began to click." Similarly, because of the crowd of (predominantly German) tourists at its mountain spas, Switzerland is no longer the "Balcony of Europe" but rather the "Hot-Water Bottle of the World." Lukacs's wit is at its best, however, when directed at the tragic consequences of the Americanization of European cultures. In the Gastein valley of Austria, for instance, Americanization has resulted in a convention center "as ugly as anything conceived by a graduate of the Yale School of Architecture"; in German editions of *Playboy* and *Penthouse*; and in Thousand Island Dressing at the Grand Hotel of Hofgastein's salad bar. Even on a ship in the Baltic Sea, Lukacs cannot escape CNN, "the global equivalent of *USA Today*, the ceaseless pictorial bilge paraded as information for semiliterate people."

One of the most amusing (and telling) anecdotes in *Destinations Past* illustrates how Americanization can soften a once-hardy people. While in England for Churchill's funeral, Lukacs happens into a fast-food restaurant called Wimpy. He recounts how a middle-aged man enters the restaurant and orders a Wimpy burger:

> [H]e said to the waitress: "A Wimpy, please." As he said that there passed a shadow of embarrassment, a flicker of resigned disturbance across his face. I thought that I could detect something of the same on the otherwise nearly vacuous, pale face of the little waitress too. . . . Surrounded by Wimpies and the cheap metallic filth of plastic dishes and the sex magazines, in the midst of this vast process of thin liquefaction that flicker of embarrassment was a faint sign of the atavistic resistance of the race.

Lukacs uses such anecdotes to contrast the vacuousness and malleability of modern life with an "older kind of humaneness." A running theme throughout these essays, in fact, is the worthiness of the bourgeois values of the past. While avoiding sentimentality, he exhibits nostalgia for the old-fashioned comforts of the Europe of his youth: turn-of-the-century apartment houses, cozy interiors, good service in restaurants, the Grand Mountain Hotels of Locarno and Lugano, evenings at the opera, family rituals, and holiday feasts. As Lukacs wrote in an essay that first appeared in these pages ("Cold Comfort," February 1993), the high-bourgeois 19th-century virtues are "a more and more precious heritage as we are carried farther and farther away from [their] time."

LIBERAL ARTS



KNOWING YOUR ENEMY

During the War of 1812, Thomas Jefferson's friend William Short wrote him with concern that Massachusetts might defect to the enemy. Jefferson replied that such would be a favorable development: "It would change the scene of war from Canada to Massachusetts, and we can get ten men to go to Massachusetts for every one who will go to Canada."

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Such reflections are the product of a life that has spanned two continents and two eras. Looking back in a 1989 essay for *American Heritage* on the monumental changes he has witnessed, Lukacs claimed that he had had "enough brushes with history" and that he did not wish for more. In the preface to this volume, however, he writes: "'Enough for One Life?' I am seventy now, but I hope that God may still allow me a little more traveling, and perhaps even a brush with history now and then . . . and a little more writing—because I can't help it." The reader of *Destinations Past* can only share his hope.

Christine Haynes is the assistant editor of Chronicles.

Theme From 'A Summer Place'

by J.O. Tate

Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy-Listening, and Other Moodsong
by Joseph Lanza
New York: St. Martin's Press;
272 pp., $22.00

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The products of mass culture are not automatically to be sneered at, first because of their massive presence and second because sometimes they have a certain merit or are somehow amusing. The *Creature From the Black Lagoon* movies are still symbolically potent, and McDonald's has been known to dispense the best coffee that is easily available. But the movie house (or the video store) and the burger joint are environments we can choose or not choose. Some of the most insidious attacks by mass culture are invasions that we can hardly escape altogether. The grunge rockers, after all, aren't responsible for the vile background music we try to ignore in overpriced restaurants. That stuff is the work of the "grownies," as I have heard them called.

Even in the dentist's chair, the pain caused by "background music" blots out any other. The sense of aesthetic, moral, and even political outrage is more powerful than routine unpleasantness. Though bad music is by definition boring, that by no means implies that it is without significance, for the denial of meaning is itself meaningful. Nonbeing is the essential contemporary assertion. And in a queasy elevator in one of Mr. John Portman's Babylonian atria, the smarmy totalitarianism implied by musical manipulativeness is so obnoxious that it overcomes any proprioceptive anxieties or creeping acrophobia. Who wants to . . . relax . . . in defiance of the law of gravity, anyway? Americans have embraced bad music just as they have endorsed bad service, bad manners, bad food, bad architecture, bad art—bad everything. Joseph Lanza's survey of the phenomenon of putrid music as an instrument of social control rests uneasily, it seems to me, upon his failure to confront a contradiction that is not so much his personal fault as it is our national shortcoming.

Lanza's book will not be the last word on the topic, but it is a useful treatment of one of the most disquieting of social phenomena. The word "Muzak" is a portmanteau of "music" and "Kodak," coined by General George Owen Squier, who pioneered modern communications for the Army and AT&T. The multiplex cable would wire the world and complete the industrialization of music, as envisioned by Bellamy, Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell in their passed-over but not *passé* visions of the future—our past and present. Lee de Forest, David Sarnoff, and the rest played a part in the mass culture of today, in which control is disguised as entertainment and even freedom. ("Stimulus Progression" is the name of Muzak's most elaborate program, which runs counter to the average worker's "fatigue curve.") Lanza sees objections to the obtrusiveness of Muzak as a "pesky bugaboo . . . the notion that piped-in music somehow interferes with an individual's right to privacy and even brainwashes listeners." But if it does not "interfere" and "brainwash," then why do managers pay for the service? Because they like the Ray Coniff Singers?

I think that Lanza is trying to establish a postmodern view of bad music, something like what Robert Venturi did with the cheerfully sleazy architecture of Las Vegas. We must admit that the phenomenon he glosses is pervasive and historically rooted. Certainly he has made a contribution to the study of industrialized, mass-produced dreadfulness, treating as he does Annunzio Paolo Mantovani, the 101 Strings, the Mystic Moods Orchestra, Les Baxter, Martin Denny, the Honolulu Fruit Gum Orchestra (which became Lawrence Welk and his Champagne Music Makers), and many another. But though he himself supplies illustrations of the control that Muzak sells, even to brothels and abattoirs, Lanza himself endorses the feel-good world created by "easy listening":

> Elevator music (besides just being good music) is essentially a distillation of the happiness that modern technology has promised. A world without elevator music would be much grimmer than its detractors (and those who take it for granted) could ever realize. This is because most of us, in our hearts, want a world tailored by Walt Disney "imagineers," an ergonomical "Main Street U.S.A.," where the buildings never make you feel too small, where the act of paying admission is tantamount to a screen-test—and where the music never stops.

Lanza has the numbers on his side. Consumerism and vulgarity have created a massive philistinism, one unanticipated by Matthew Arnold, even though that worthy knew what "doing as one likes" implies. To comprehend the immensity of the sickness, radical irony, shock tactics, and elitist standards are required: Adorno's essays, Nabokov's *Lolita*, Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*—and George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, which cauterizes vulgarity with emetic ghoulishness: flesh-eating zombies staggering to mall music.

Just as vital creatures have no need of "stimulation," those clear of mind and conscience don't need music for anesthesia but for higher and more demanding reasons. The quicksand of Muzak absorbed rock 'n' roll without so much as a belch, just as it did "the classics," proving its own power of gelatinous mindlessness. Joseph Lanza's study is advocacy instead of criticism, confusing bad taste with good and, what's worse, soft totalitarianism with the good life. But it has its own documentary value and will provide a basis for the transvaluation that is desperately needed.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

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Letter From Winthrop University

by Luther M. Boggs, Jr.

On Campus With the National AIDS Quilt

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It was a sleepy Sunday afternoon when a section of the national AIDS quilt visited Winthrop University. The sun, slipping low into the tops of the pines, shown red across the sparsely populated campus. With many students still enjoying the waning hours of another weekend spent elsewhere, Rock Hill, South Carolina, was not up to its normal weekday bustle. The lobby of Dinkins Student Center was nearly empty when the faithful began to trickle in.

By the time I arrived, an orderly mob of six or seven students was gathered around a table near the center of the room. Behind the table, an earnest young woman was passing out red ribbons. Take a ribbon, she said, take a pin. Had the assembled not been so willing, so eager to accept, she might easily have been hocking samples of the latest celebrity fragrance—Elizabeth Taylor's True Devotion?—at a department store makeup counter in nearby Charlotte. Two others were handing out small white candles collared with the nifty little cardboard wax guards that never quite seem to work. I politely declined, figuring I would do my candle-holding and wax-monitoring on Christmas Eve.

Beyond the ribbon girl were the early arrivals. Some sat on the floor, others on the several chairs. Some chatted quietly with one another about this or that or, more likely, nothing at all. Others, solemn and reflective, sat quietly, gazing across the floor toward a bright and busy expanse of color, a hallowed patchwork of large fabric squares—the AIDS quilt.

Someone handed me a program. "An Ecumenical Prayer Service," it read, "REMEMBERING THE COMMON THREAD." The title was gathered to one side to leave room for an illustration: two figures of indeterminate gender embracing below a quilt sewn together with, yes, a common thread. The service, the bulletin continued, was "for all of us touched by the AIDS Crisis"—the word "crisis" matter-of-factly capitalized and neatly assimilated into the two-word, single entity "AIDS Crisis."

And what did that mean, "for all of us touched by the AIDS Crisis"? That all of us had, in fact, been touched by AIDS? That all of us should have been touched by AIDS? That those not certain they had been touched by AIDS should retire to the adjoining game room for Ping-Pong or Pole Position and leave the praying and singing and wax control to more qualified souls? I wasn't sure; I wasn't even sure what "touched by" meant.

The proud sponsor of the affair was an umbrella organization called Winthrop Cooperative Campus Ministries. In search of some explanation, I turned to the back page of the bulletin: "Winthrop Cooperative Campus Ministries is a cooperative effort by several different denominations at Winthrop University to serve the Winthrop student body, faculty and staff through a variety of enriching opportunities." Beyond a general declaration of geography, the statement was more or less, well, vague. The group's purpose—to serve the community—was clear enough, but the rest was a muddle. I wondered how it served and to what end. "Through a variety of enriching opportunities," I read again. This prayer service, I concluded, was an opportunity for enrichment.

Seven campus ministries were listed as affiliates. The usual mainline suspects—the Presbyterian and United Methodist clubs, the Catholic league and a combined group of Lutherans and Episcopalians—had signed on, as had the African Methodist Episcopal bunch and something called the Reformed University Fellowship. In a mild surprise, the Baptists topped the list.

Outside, beyond the crisscrossed concrete walkways, past the dogwood trees and magnolias, the hour was sounding from the bell tower. Six o'clock. Inside, 25 or 30 students huddled for the service. Still engrossed in the bulletin, I scarcely noticed as a clergyman called the assembled to order and said something about the tragic beauty of the AIDS quilt. The section laid out on the floor behind him, behind the velvet rope barriers otherwise used to corral patrons at busy banks and museums, was on tour. This would be a brief stop: one night only. The wonder was that it had stopped here at all.

After an opening hymn, a pastor came forward to lead a responsive reading. "We gather this evening to remember," he said, "longing for the Caring One who calls us from darkness into the light of love." "Caring One"? "Light of love"? Why not, among Christians, "God" and "salvation"? I found out soon enough. The reading continued. "We gather to be drawn together, embraced by [the] nurturing arms of all who sojourn along this path we call life." The vigil, then, was less about petitioning God and more about gathering people together to heal each other—a curious focus for an occasion, however ecumenical, billed as a prayer service. Not Thy will, Lord, but mine.

Self-flattery quickly yielded to self-loathing: "We gather this evening in sadness . . . remembering [those] who have died of AIDS and acknowledging the indifference of our church, our society and the slowness of our human response." Public indifference to AIDS in America? About whom were they talking? After all, Ronald Reagan—the Evil Executive many in the AIDS lobby still seem to think invented the disease—had long since retired to California. If not Reagan, I thought, then whom? Perhaps the new demon on the block, Rush Limbaugh.

As I recall recent history, neither churches nor society at large has been indifferent to the plight of those with AIDS. The names of AIDS victims have been etched across the national heart. From Ryan White to Kimberly Bergalis, from Rock Hudson to Magic Johnson, we have prayed for the living and mourned the loss of the dead. And we the people, the taxpayers, have spent billions on the quest for a cure. In Bill Clinton's America, the federal government will spend $1.3 billion on AIDS research in this year alone. Indifference? Not even close.

The stars have certainly done their part. Nearly all of them—from rock gods to jocks, from Hollywood nymphs to game-show hosts—have kept the faith, sporting their red ribbons at every Academy Awards show, every Emmy

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Awards, every MTV Music Video Awards, every benefit, tribute, dog show, and peep show since Reagan left. No indifference here. (Perhaps no difference either, but that is another story.)

And what of those gathered that Sunday afternoon, the kids with mile-long faces staring blankly at the giant panels of the AIDS quilt, addressing themselves to the "Caring One" and holding little candles? Were they, like other Americans, shamefully indifferent? Or were they unlike the rest, somehow different, caring in spite of themselves, soldiers at the vanguard of a compassion revolution? I really couldn't say.

The reading continued. "We gather this evening in compassionate support . . . embracing those living with the HIV virus and those who love and care for them." With these words, the faithful embraced not only the afflicted, but also the homosexuality of so many AIDS casualties. The scourge of AIDS gave way to the evils of homophobia, intolerance, and bigotry—maladies that nowadays are said to plague all those who reject even one plank of the radical gay agenda. The struggle for gay legitimacy was joined.

Another minister came forward to lead a "Litany of Remembrance" of those "whom we have loved and who have died of AIDS . . . our lovers and spouses with whom we shared so intimately . . . our children . . . our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins . . . [and] our friends." It was now class participation time. "We recall by name all those whom we lost to AIDS." The assembled, the bulletin noted parenthetically, should, "as you feel prompted, recall aloud the first name of your loved ones who have died." Six or eight people spoke up. All of the departed, however, seemed to have had masculine names, leaving out—for now—the mothers, sisters, and aunts. Oh, well.

Some who spoke probably recalled relatives and friends. No doubt others had to rely on the names of friends of friends or cousins of friends or friends of cousins. Some could not think of a single person who had died of AIDS. Among these, I could not even recall the name of someone who had known someone who had died of AIDS. I did recall a dear friend who several years ago was terribly ill and had had himself tested for AIDS. But he did not—thank God—have the virus. Even as I counted my blessings and stayed quiet, I couldn't help feeling I was somehow letting everyone down.

Another prayer began. "Loving God, Mother and Father of us all, remember the gift of life you shared with us through our loved ones who have died." It seemed odd that a prayer so fuzzy in addressing God should beseech the Almighty to remember, but perhaps the message wasn't intended for Him. After all, the next line—"Send your good spirit to hover around us, gently touching our pain"—sounded like a prayer to the ghost of some long-dead Arkansas Indian chief. Perhaps it was.

At last it was time for the closing hymn, "Weave Us Together." The first verse, saluting multiculturalism, seemed not to fit the program. The second verse, trumpeting the equality of sexual lifestyles, fit perfectly: "We are different instruments, playing our own melodies, each one tuning to a different key." As if praying to the dead Indian hadn't been enough, the third verse betrayed still more theological confusion. "Now the God in me, greets the God in thee, in one great family"—a succinct distillation not of Christianity, but of Brady Bunch pantheism. Amidst such ecumenicism, Christ had not once been mentioned.

About the candles. As a child, I always looked forward to the lighting of the candles on Christmas Eve. With only the moon outside and the lights inside the church turned down low, I would watch with great anticipation as the light was passed from the Christ candle down each aisle to each pew and finally, in turn, to each parishioner. When those candles were lifted the sanctuary was filled with light, a symbol, our pastor said, of the gospel of Christ illuminating the world.

There was plenty of light that afternoon around the AIDS quilt at the Winthrop University student center. No one bothered to draw the blinds on the setting sun or cut the florescent light tubes overhead, but they lit the candles anyway.

Nothing happened.

Luther M. Boggs, Jr., writes from Atlanta, Georgia.

Letter From Colorado

by Edward L. Lederman

Back to Basics

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The day after last year's election that torpedoed our nation's most advanced experiment in "Outcome Based Education" (OBE), a pleasant-faced teacher appeared on the evening news. "Shocked and depressed," she said she was. "I've been teaching for over 15 years, giving the kids the best education possible. And to have them win like this. It's a slap; it's like saying I don't know what I'm doing." Earlier that day many students had returned home from school

LIBERAL ARTS

FREEDOM I.Q. TEST

"Civilized Publications" in Philadelphia recently announced the release of a book entitled *Are You Still a Slave?* by "notoriously controversial" author Shahrazad Ali. Ali, who claims this follow-up to her *Blackman's Guide to Understanding the Black woman* is "another self-help book designed to uplift and help the entire Black community," structures her new book around a 50-question "Freedom I.Q. Test."

Ali says that *Are You Still a Slave?* simply determines if blacks "experience slavery flashbacks which influence behavior and control thinking in the form of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder." According to Civilized Publications' press release, the book represents a "high-tech move towards 'interactive literature.'" The quiz is "conveniently 'True or False.' [*sic*] with the top score being 100 and you get two chances to pass [*sic*]. Score definitions and psychological interpretation are included, and each book comes hermetically sealed in plastic for 'privacy.'"

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worried, because teachers had told them that the newly elected slate of three "Back to Basics" candidates, who now held the majority on the five-member school board, would remove calculators and computers from math classrooms, terminate physical education programs, and tear down designer playground equipment. Self-pity and demonization dominated the immediate reactions of Littleton's "outcome-based" educators to the repudiation of their theories at the polls. Perhaps at the heart of this angst and panic was the knowledge that the election was less about OBE than about something far more significant: control.

Heralded in the national media for its forward-looking "reforms," Littleton School District had been featured in several *Education Week* articles as the flagship of OBE, a pedagogical approach that purports to emphasize the acquisition and demonstration of skills over knowledge. Early on, there was little warning for Littleton's enlightened educators that a challenge to their authority lurked in the wings. "We need professionals leading us on these things. I don't feel parents are qualified to carry the ball." This statement by Pat Markwell, Littleton PTA president, was typical of initial community reaction. "These things" refers to the total restructuring of public education in Littleton, an upper-middle-class suburb south of Denver possessed of 57,000 registered voters, three high schools, four middle schools, 15 grade schools, 17,000 students, 975 teachers, and a pocket revolution.

Bill Cisney, proprietor of a large fabric outlet in Denver; Carol Brzeczek, a bookkeeper and housewife; and John Fanchi, a professional engineer with a Ph.D. in physics, composed the "Back to Basics" slate. Each received about 15,000 votes. Their nearest competitor from the incumbent "Reform Coalition" received under 9,000. The "Basics" were outspent four to one and publicly opposed not only by the teachers' union but, in an unprecedented open letter, by every principal in the district.

Their success can be attributed to any number of causes: the intellectual bankruptcy of OBE; the daunting commitment in time and energy of several Littleton parents, particularly Cisney and Brzeczek; newly instituted mail-in voting, which diluted the power of the teachers' union at the polls; school board contests that, in Colorado, have been moved to a November cycle; and, into the stretch, the monumentally inept intervention of People for the American Way. Perhaps the most ironic of the many slurs hurled at the "Basics" slate was that they were uninformed reactionaries who did not know what OBE was all about. In fact, Cisney and Brzeczek had gained an intimate knowledge of OBE through endless volunteer hours spent trying to make it work, and their base of support consisted of parents they met along the way.

The mutiny began innocently enough in 1989, when Bill Cisney heeded the call of Littleton educators for community involvement in a new educational program that had been started a couple of years earlier. Cisney, a liberal arts graduate of Amherst College and parent of two children, was initially intrigued by OBE (aka "Restructuring"). He attended board meetings, gave assigned presentations, and later served on the Heritage High School writing committee.

In the early spring of 1992, after five years of meetings, "community forums," and much public relations, the Littleton Board of Education announced that 13 long-awaited "outcomes" (extremely vague, often awkwardly phrased dictums such as: "ability to clearly communicate information and express ideas and opinions in writing" and "understanding of the American culture and the democratic system") would now constitute the district's raison d'être. These "outcomes" were to serve as blueprints for high school graduation requirements and curriculum. The school board had left it to the individual high schools to adopt their own implementation schedules. Heritage High, which Cisney's son now attended, earmarked the next crop of incoming freshmen (class of '96) to be the first to graduate under the new pedagogical order.

The focus then shifted from "outcomes" to "assessments," the supposedly more particular standards (65 of which were eventually drafted) that teachers and administrators would use to evaluate whether a flesh-and-blood student had attained an "outcome." These were to be developed by school-level committees. Cisney and Brzeczek served on the writing and reading committees, respectively. Problems immediately surfaced. The specter of bias because of the highly subjective nature of the assessments was countered with a proposal for a faculty panel-review of student accomplishments. However, this then raised the problem of an evaluation system that would involve almost as many staff hours as teaching itself. But implementation of OBE, tar baby that it was, was the least of it.

What, in fact, was Heritage High to teach? To Cisney, Brzeczek, and other parents who were monitoring developments, it became increasingly clear that OBE would not so much enhance curriculum as obliterate it. James Ferguson, principal of Heritage High, was often quoted in the papers as saying that knowing about such cluttering "facts" as where Florida was located was secondary to possessing the skills "necessary to access" this "information."

Responsibility for resolving the implementation problems at Heritage High fell to a "Central Committee," composed of principal James Ferguson, a school counselor, and six teachers. The Central Committee was to meet over the summer, and, by the way, parents were not allowed to participate in these meetings—neither as participants nor as observers.

That Wednesday, Cisney and Brzeczek handed out leaflets to parents coming to register their children at Heritage. To those who expressed interest, Cisney provided a 15-page single-spaced report he had prepared that dissected, in explicit detail, just what "administrative" problems had been left up in the air and were now to be resolved in closed session. A week later the dissidents prevailed upon Heritage's school accountability organization to demand of Ferguson that he include two parent members on the Central Committee and open it up to observers. Ferguson reluctantly acquiesced.

Two parents, Sam Drury and Dave Holland, both advocates of OBE and, in Drury's case, publicly at odds with Cisney's skepticism about the program, were selected to sit on the Central Committee, which reconvened in August. After being accused of lying by principal Ferguson, Cisney and his group of observers started taping and transcribing "alternate minutes" of the Central Committee meetings, which they sent to a growing list of parents.

The meetings dragged on through the fall. The pattern of parents seeking some structure by which learning and "outcomes" could be concretely measured and of educators opposing such structure culminated in the submission,

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by Drury, of "Fourteen Areas of Concern" to the committee. These concerns included unresolved issues of remediation (what if a child "flunked" one of the 65 "assessments") and a delicately phrased question of final authority: "Who is it that determines when the proficiency standards will be implemented?"

The committee first responded with silence (noted in Cisney's transcript) then took the list under consideration and scheduled discussion for December 10. Three days before that meeting, Ferguson and the teachers again tried to close the committee deliberations to parents, arguing that they were going to discuss "personnel matters" along with the 14 concerns. This time, Cisney et al. (eventually represented by downtown attorney Melvin Sabey, another parent), obtained a temporary restraining order. Despite advice from district counsel that the Central Committee was a public body for purposes of the Sunshine Law, the Littleton Board of Education chose to support Ferguson and challenge the parents' right to observe. The board's rationale for that decision was that the professionals needed both privacy and flexibility to restructure education in the district. In time this excuse would prove no more convincing to the public than it did to the court, which eventually found for plaintiff parents two months before the election.

In August, the "Back to Basics" slate was formed with Cisney, Brzeczek, and Fanchi committed to run. At every juncture Littleton educators marginalized the group. They were "radicals," "defective products," and "troublemakers" who did not speak for the great mass of docile parents. But amid all the name-calling in the context of OBE, another phenomenon, only indirectly related to high school issues, was at play. Reading problems in grade-schoolers and middle-schoolers, never vetted in the press, had been created by the district's emphasis on "Whole Language" to the exclusion of phonics. This, combined with a pronounced lack of standards and assessments, propelled the parents of younger families to join the camp of older parents who backed the "Back to Basics" slate.

In early October, disturbing rumors coupled with insinuating fliers began circulating in Littleton. Cisney, Brzeczek, and Fanchi had been investigated and found to be "stealth" candidates of the "religious right." The "Basics" slate, none of whom are particularly religious, had anticipated an attack like this and continued to slog away. What happened next, nobody expected. On October 4, Berny Morson, education reporter for the *Rocky Mountain News*, broke a story that related how "People for the American Way," a liberal, self-proclaimed "watch dog" group, had evaluated the responses of the Basics candidates to a questionnaire and found their positions to be "in common" with the religious right. In follow-up articles Morson disclosed that People for the American Way's newly established rent-free office in Boulder was sponsored by . . . the state teachers' union.

Even before these disclosures, the Reform Coalition, a slate of incumbent educators that was formed to battle the "Back to Basics" movement, tried to distance itself from OBE. In a September 28 forum, incumbent Woody Davis declared that it was not, after all, "Outcome Based Education" but "Performance Evaluation" that the coalition stood for. He did not try to explain the difference. This came as a huge surprise to administrators who had been using the former term for the last five years. The assembled parents were visibly angered at the dodge.

Two weeks later the reformers tried to pirate the slogan "Basics Plus." By this time the Morson stories had robbed them of their most devastating weapon: the religious right smear. Still, unable to articulate just what it was they stood for, they struggled on, attempting to affix negative labels to the "Basics" slate: "Backwards to Basics"; "Back to the 50's." And, of course, there was the campaign of whispers, which included the rumor that the slate would tear down playground equipment.

The Littleton experience gives much hope for those who await a consumer revolt in public education. There is, however, another less optimistic sign: that the more socially and financially powerful the population of a school district is, the more likely, one way or another, it will wrest control of its schools from "educational providers." While this bodes well for the upper-middle class, it leaves less-powerful communities to the tender mercies of the education establishment. It may foreshadow public education Darwinism: the strong control their educators while the weak fall prey to pedagogical churning, their children always subject to the latest self-serving, curriculum-deconstructing fads.

Edward L. Lederman is a senior fellow in education policy at the Independence Institute in Denver.

Letter From Belize

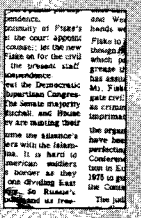
by Ray Lowry

Caribbean Vacation

◆

Christmas was approaching, and I was getting homesick. I'd been in Honduras for a year and a half, teaching school for peanuts at a small, bilingual parochial school in Puerto Cortés. Ok, ok. I was teaching school for lempiras, not for peanuts. But the difference is so slight that it isn't worth arguing about. In any event, I wanted to go home for the holidays, but my salary—the equivalent of 150 Yankee dollars—wouldn't permit such an extravagance.

LIBERAL ARTS



DOUBLE TROUBLE

"If any cross-dressing customers are confident enough to go shopping dressed as a woman it's possible for them to have a second card, so that they can avoid embarrassment or difficulties when paying by check."

—A spokesman for a Scottish bank that provides photo IDs for check-cashing and offers transvestites two, one showing them dressed as a man, the other as a woman (as reported by the Chicago Tribune *last winter).*

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I was also under pressure from the local immigration authorities to leave the country. As they explained it, "Tourists eventually go home"; I had been asking them to renew my tourist visa every 30 days for far too long. If I left Honduras, they said—even if just for a few days—they would feel better about my "tourist" status. It was then that I hatched the idea of going to Belize for the holidays. Yes, I would leave Spanish Honduras behind and head across the gulf to British Belize. I would spend Christmas and New Year's Day in a country where I could actually speak the language fluently.

I make some inquiries in Puerto Cortés, and I'm told to go down to a little lagoon where the local fishermen hold court. They direct me to a little shack that has a "*Viajes a Belice*" sign on the door, but the shack is permanently boarded up. What gives? The woman at the nearby fruit stand explains—the boat sank during a storm some time ago. Several people drowned, and the boat captain is now in prison. Hmmm. But she directs me to another shack that doubles as a pawn shop, and here I find my boat to Belize.

I am told to appear the next morning at 6:00 A.M., to bring 150 lempiras for the fare (a steep $22 U.S.), and to get an exit visa stamped in my passport at the local immigration office. I follow these instructions, and the following morning, I, along with ten other passengers, am dutifully waiting. The man we had spoken with the day before rolls up on his bicycle at about 7:00. We pay him. We also must give him our passports so that he can make a passenger list and get it approved by the local navy office. He then tells us the boat will leave at 10:00 A.M. and disappears.

I have a leisurely breakfast and struggle through the morning's Spanish language newspaper. After picking up some last-minute snacks, I'm waiting by the bridge as I was directed. And sure enough, a little boat comes putt-putting up at 10:00 exactly. It initially appears as though there's a problem. The tide is too high for the boat to fit *under* the bridge. But after the boat is filled with water, it sits low enough to pass through. Then they bail it out on the other side. Interesting.

We climb in, ready to go. The boat—known locally as a *goleta*—is an open rowboat, about 25 feet long and four feet at its widest point. It has a 30 horsepower Evinrude outboard motor on the back. *El capitan* is a guy of perhaps 25 years of age wearing a grubby baseball cap, a torn pair of pants, no shoes, and no shirt. Hey—no shoes, no shirt, no problem. An officer from the local naval base comes down to check things out. He tells us to put on lifejackets, and we're off.

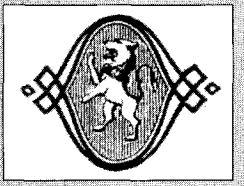
We head directly north from Puerto Cortés across the Gulf of Honduras. When Columbus visited here back in 1502, his ships were nearly wrecked in the gulf. The water is tremendously deep, and this results in gigantic swells and unpredictable choppiness. After reaching more shallow and navigable waters, he reportedly exclaimed, "Thank God we are out of those depths." The word "depths" in Spanish, by the way, is *honduras*. The tiny boat rocks up and down with the huge swells. We putt-putt ever forward at a speed of ten miles per hour. Four persons who forgot to take their *tabletas de Dramamina* are upchucking overboard. After about four hours of this we spot a bunch of little islands, or "cays."

The trip across the gulf was a bit tense, and I think everyone, the laid-back *capitan* included, says a silent "thank God we are out of those depths" as we reach the shallower waters surrounding the cays. We stop on one for a leg-stretch. It's a lovely little place about half the size of a football field and is covered with palm trees. There are huge piles of conch shells left by fishermen who frequent the place.

The rest of the journey is grand. We putt-putt past hundreds of beautiful little cays. Some are deserted. Others have lovely little vacation homes on them. The water is so blue and clear that we can see down for a hundred feet or more. We cross and recross the barrier reef a dozen or more times. It's the biggest and best reef outside of the Great Barrier Reef of Australia. Soon the dense, jungle-covered shore comes into view with thousands of exotic birds flying about. We experience several more hours of this until we reach Dangriga, known as Stann Creek Town when Belize was known as British Honduras.

We putt-putt a hundred yards up Stann Creek and tie up at a little dock. A guy from the police station comes down on a bicycle to check out our papers. He speaks both Spanish and English but seems to have some difficulty communicating with one passenger from Brazil. Having once studied Portuguese in college, I was able to communicate freely with this guy and had conversed with him during the entire journey (except when he was throwing up overboard). The Spanish-speaking passengers suggest to the policeman that I translate. This is all rather silly as Spanish speakers can usually understand Portuguese. But the cop is a native English, not Spanish speaker, so I oblige. The problem is that the Brazilian doesn't have a lot of money with him. I tell his story. The guy got a slot on a professional soccer team in Guadalajara, Mexico, and has spent the past month traveling overland from Brazil. When the cop learns the Brazilian is a *futebolista*, he just about goes nuts. We promptly walk to the police station and get our passports

LIBERAL ARTS



THE BUSH LEAGUE

"National Sporting Goods Career Seminar—Who should attend? Professionals seeking a career change, entrepreneurs seeking business opportunities, [and] college graduates entering the work force. . . . Meet and network with over 1,500 sporting goods manufacturers and retailers. . . . George Bush—keynote speaker."

—*from a June 27 advertisement in the* Chicago Tribune.

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stamped without the slightest hassle and without paying one cent. This is so the cop can be done with us and take his Brazilian friend (with whom he now communicates with ease) home to meet his *futebol*-crazed children.

My first unpleasant surprise upon reaching Belize is the large number of people inquiring whether they can get a seat on our boat for its return journey. There are clearly more takers than there are seats. Will I be able to get a boat back? It might be difficult. My second unpleasant surprise is the cost of things. You get two Belizian dollars per U.S. dollar (Belizian money looks almost identical to Canadian money, complete with Queen Elizabeth). You can't touch a cheap hotel room *without* a bath for less than $8 U.S. (or $16 Belizian). The same thing would cost a buck and a half in Honduras. A hamburger costs $2.50 U.S. A soda costs a dollar! My third unpleasant surprise is that no one even wants to look at the wad of Honduran lempiras I have in my pocket. I cannot change the money anywhere.

I knock about town. The people in Dangriga are predominantly black, though a few folks hail from other former British colonies (Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, etc.). The English they speak is an interesting mixture of the very proper English spoken by educated Crown Colony residents and creole-Caribbean slang. Generous doses of Cockney and Irish accents can be detected. Very understandable, but very different.

Many of Dangriga's residents are "Garifunas" (gah-RIFF-oo-nahs), an ethnic group scattered along the Caribbean coast of Belize and Honduras. The ancestors of today's Garifunas were black slaves who escaped from plantations on the island of St. Vincent and intermarried with local Carib Indians. It took nearly a century for the British to pacify them. They were eventually relocated to the nearby island of Roatan, where some of their descendants still reside. However, large numbers of Garifunas migrated to the mainland by canoe in the mid-1800's and established communities in Belize and Honduras. Large numbers of these people are gathered this evening along the banks of Stann Creek, where they wildly dance to music made on traditional drums and conch-shell horns.

The earth has an intense reddish clay color, which gives the dirt streets of Dangriga an interesting hue. Everything is built on wooden stilts, and nothing is paved. Yet the town is quite clean and most buildings are recently painted, lending a well-scrubbed charm to the otherwise dilapidated, weather-beaten appearance of the place.

I return to my hotel room and think things over. I clearly don't have enough U.S. money to last in Belize for long. Even if I could change my Honduran money it wouldn't go far. What to do? I decide to head south the following morning to Punta Gorda, where there is a ferry connection to Puerto Barrios, Guatemala. I know from experience that I can change my Honduran money in Puerto Barrios. I also know my money will go much farther in Guatemala. So I'm up early the next morning.

The bus trip to Punta Gorda is five hours long (in a used American school bus). The cost is an astonishing $5 U.S.—a similar ride in Honduras or Guatemala would cost about 50 to 80 cents. But I have to say that it is a stunning ride. The dense jungle, the hues of green, and the assortment of birds are incredible. The road is also incredible—an incredible mess. It is alternately dusty and muddy. Every inch of it is bumpy. I reach Punta Gorda and find that the hotel and restaurant situation is pretty bleak. The town itself isn't much more than a jungle outpost—the last bit of civilization along the bumpy, dusty, muddy trail. But no problem. I'm out of here on the next afternoon's ferry, or so I think.

The next day, I and several others wait for the ferry to come from Guatemala. And we wait. And wait. And wait some more. You begin to understand why the Spanish verb *esperar* means both to wait and to hope. Waiting and hoping. Waiting and hoping. Waiting and hoping. The ferry never comes. It is Friday, the 24th of December. The ferrymen have apparently taken the day off, though no one seems to know for sure. Will next Tuesday's ferry come? "Maybe, maybe not" is the answer. Do I even have enough money to last until Tuesday? A sense of panic sinks in. I'm going to run out of money in this country!

The following day I hop aboard a Christmas Day bus to Belize City. Surely I will find someone there who will change my lempiras into Belizian dollars. And surely I will find a way out of Belize. After five hours on the road, I once again find myself in Dangriga. The bus has a short layover, so I stroll a half block to the Stann Creek dock, and lo and behold a fellow with his hair all done up in dred locks approaches me and says, "You be looking fo' a boat to Puerto Cortés, Mistah?" He knows a guy trying to fill a boat to leave that day. It is 2:00 in the afternoon. I get my bag off of the bus and go with him.

Yes, indeed! This guy has *two* boats. He and his brother are going to Cortés. And yes, they will take me along. When do we leave? *"Media hora"*—in 30 minutes. There's about 25 of us. We each fork over $70 Belizian dollars, or an astonishing price of $35 U.S. It leaves me with three measly Belizian dollars (and a useless wad of Honduran lempiras) in my pocket. But what a stroke of luck! We also hand over our passports. Then the waiting begins. The time ticks by. The brothers return at about 3:00 and say *"el mar es tan bravo"*—the sea is too fierce. One looks at me, moves his hand up and down, and says "choppy." They return at 4:00 and inform us that we can't wait for the sea to calm down. We must leave now. Any objections? There are none.

We climb into two open rowboats, each about 28 feet in length. Both have *two* 40 horsepower Yamaha outboard engines on the back. We head down Stann Creek to the sea, and most of the guys—including me—must jump overboard to push the boats over the sand bar at the mouth of the creek. We get going, soaking wet, and the water is very rough. We are going far faster than the boat I took coming here. The waves are also far larger. The combination of the two creates a pain in my butt and lower back that is beyond my ability to describe. Back through the cays and reefs. The sea is rough as hell. We are soaked to the skin. We're too scared even to think about getting seasick. We are actually bailing water to stay afloat. We don't even have *one* lifejacket for every *three* people. What's it going to be like when we reach the deep waters of the gulf? And it will be dark by then, too! Yes, it begins to dawn on us all that we've climbed aboard Charon's boat on the River Styx—the boat ride to Hell.

The surf is soaking us. We can't bail fast enough to keep the water out of the boat. We almost overturn several times. I—a native Minnesotan—am actually getting the chills in *Central America*. The Belizian and Honduran passengers

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are turning blue. After two and a half hours, we reach the very same cay we stopped at on the journey to Belize—half-way cay. We cruise up to the beach. *El Capitan* shuts off the motor and announces, *El golfo es un perra*! (The Gulf is a bitch!) *Nos esperamos aqui*. (We'll wait here.) *Que largo*? (How long?) *Amanana*. (Until tomorrow.) Never in your life could you expect to see 25 people *happier* to be stranded on a desert island overnight. We drag our stuff ashore. We climb out of our wet clothes. We build a huge fire.

Out of nowhere, a funny little black man appears and asks us what is going on. We tell him. He jumps for joy. His little fishing boat is on the other side of the island out of gas. The captain cuts a deal: feed us some of the conch you have been catching all day and I will take you to Puerto Cortés in the morning. I'll bring you and some gas back on my return to Dangriga. We stoke the fire, cook a ton of fresh conch over the coals. We lay down on the beach and try to sleep. It rains periodically. And these tiny land crabs pester me all night. But at least there are no insects.

Everyone is up before dawn. We load our stuff into the boats. By 6:00 A.M. we are off. The sea is calm. Both engines on both boats are running at top speed. It's smoother going than yesterday, but still a butt-killer. Within a half hour we can see the mountains behind Puerto Cortés. An hour after that we are entering the harbor.

We stop off at the naval base. We unload our stuff, and the local officer on duty starts shaking us down for "import taxes." We all growl at him. When he demands 100 lempiras tax for an ancient ghetto blaster that is obviously the personal property of one passenger, the passenger tells him to stuff it and tosses the thing into the drink. Bravo! The naval officer quickly surmises that we aren't in a mood to be screwed with, and he reluctantly sends us on our way to the local immigration office.

I ride the *urbano*, or little city bus, to the immigration office. I surely must smell like hell. I *know* I *look* like hell. I get my soaking wet passport stamped. I engage in a bit of small talk with the immigration officials. Yes, I *did* leave the country. I *am* a tourist. They kid me about my poor Spanish. You need a girlfriend to help you learn, they say. I agree and mention that she could also wash my socks. They nod approvingly.

I head home to my tiny cold-water flat that I share with cockroaches, lizards, and huge spiders. I turn on my fan—my Honduran air-conditioner—and grab a bottle of warm beer from the ice chest—my Honduran refrigerator. I lie down in my hammock, stare contentedly at the ceiling, and wonder how I could ever have felt homesick when I have all of this.

Ray Lowry writes from the island of Roatan in Honduras, where he is a teacher at a bilingual primary school.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

The Honorable Gentleman From New York

◆

It shouldn't be news to anyone that conservative middle-aged professors are rare birds. Until recently, right-wing academics have been almost as rare as black ones, and for pretty much the same reason: bright conservatives could generally do better elsewhere. So it didn't go to my head a few years ago when I learned that the Reagan White House was thinking of nominating me for the council of the National Endowment for the Humanities. I mean, how many Scholars for Reagan-Bush were there, after all?

Still, I was secretly a little proud—that is, until someone showed me a list of Jimmy Carter's appointees. And when the Reagan folks withdrew the nomination of a worthy fellow nominee who had, over the years, guarded his tongue less assiduously than I, I recognized that the Democrats were not uniquely political. Call me naive, but I was disappointed to learn how much politics affects political appointments.

In my case, the White House sure was cautious. If the Reagan administration had been half as careful with its Cabinet officers and Supreme Court nominees, it would have been spared some embarrassment. I had to fill out forms listing every organization I'd ever belonged to, every place I'd ever lived, and every time I'd left the country. (The dates of a trip to the Bahamas with my fishing buddies gave me trouble, until my wife reminded me that it was the weekend of Mother's Day, 1976. What a memory she has!) I calculated my net worth for the first time in my life—a depressing exercise—and started hearing from old friends I hadn't seen in years, who wanted to know why the FBI was asking about me.

Nobody asked me whether I'd ever smoked marijuana, but this was before that question became de rigueur for folks of my generation. I wonder, could I have come up with anything as classy as Bill Bennett's answer ("If I have any confessions to make, I'll make them to a priest") or as bewildering as Marion Barry's ("Not to my knowledge")?

Anyway, in the fullness of time, a press release came from the White House, announcing my nomination. Its three paragraphs contained three errors of fact and a couple more of implication, but conservatives aren't surprised when government screws up. I wasn't upset until the last line, which read, "Mr. Reed is a native of New York."

Well. Norman Podhoretz wrote once about the dirty little secrets that we all carry around with us. His was his lust for power and fame; mine (one of them, anyway) is that I was born in New York. At the French Hospital. In Manhattan.

This was embarrassing. People I thought were friends, men and women I've known for years, came up and said nasty things like "I didn't know you were from New York." It did no good at all to explain that my dad was just working there temporarily. It didn't even help to quote the Duke of Wellington, who said about his Irish birth, "Because a man is born in a stable, that does not make him a horse." My supposed friends just snickered. I think they're still snickering, behind my back.

It's not fair. I could change my religion or my politics at will. I could, with a little trouble, change my name, or my wife. Even at my age, I could take up a new profession. But I'm stuck for life with my place of birth.

You may find it hard to imagine how awkward, how *shameful*, it is for a semi-professional Southerner to have been born in the north. And not just in the north, but in the very belly of the beast, in the Big Apple, Noo Yawk itself. For years I have downplayed this fact, going so far as to omit it when filling out forms.

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Given the chance to write autobiographical squibs I've sometimes resorted to misdirection: "Mr. Reed, a Tennessean," for instance, or "John Reed grew up in Kingsport, Tennessee." But I thought I'd better tell the FBI the truth. So the White House—my own President that I voted for—outed me. That's right up there for betrayal with having the dictator of communist Russia to dinner (which came later).

It was some consolation, however, that the appointment gave me a title. When my nomination was confirmed by the Senate, on a slow day, I became "the Honorable" by presidential commission, and I have a piece of paper to prove it. When I start feeling smug about it, humility is easily restored by repeating the mantra, "The *Honorable* Edward Kennedy. The *Honorable* Edward Kennedy. . . ." Still, I've always been a pushover for titles.

Southerners tend to be. Simple Jeffersonian taste might prescribe "sir" or "ma'am" as forms of address in all circumstances save those that call for obscenity, but that has been a lost cause down here ever since planter-plutocrats started appointing each other to high office. One term in the upper house of the state legislature and you're "Senator" for life. A stretch in traffic court makes you "Judge." And any military rank of captain or above—regular, reserve, National Guard, or Civil Air Patrol—can be used without embarrassment until they fire the shots over your grave. This affection for high-sounding forms of address is probably what has led to the widespread misuse of "Reverend"—and of course the most honored title of all is "Coach."

Twenty-five years ago I used to tell my students not to call me "Doctor." I told them that form of address should be reserved for physicians, surgeons, dentists, chiropractors, and maybe pharmacists. But this wasn't modesty. No, my secret objection was that "Doctor" isn't grand enough. Any fool can be a doctor and a great many are. (I've been party to creating a few myself.) Any distinction shared with Dr. Robert Mugabe (LL.D., University of Massachusetts) isn't much of a distinction. I prefer the inverse snobbery of the Ivy League's "Mr." and, in my heart, I really like the Teutonic magnificence of "Professor." It takes, if nothing else, a certain amount of *Sitzfleisch* and low animal cunning to get an academic job these days and to hold it long enough to become "Professor."

My buddy Eugene says he never calls anyone "Doctor" who can't deliver a baby and never calls anyone "Professor" who doesn't play piano in a whorehouse. Obviously, I disagree with Eugene on "Professor," and I've even mellowed some on "Doctor." If we restricted that term to what a flack I know calls "vendors in the health care delivery industry," a lot of high school principals and Presbyterian ministers would get upset. But my opinion of Tom Clancy's history-professor hero in *Patriot Games* dropped considerably when he insisted on that form of address, and I still make fun of my academic colleagues who put "Dr." on their checks.

"The Honorable," though—well, that's different, isn't it? My students can call me "Your Honor," if they want. For that title, it's worth taking an oath to support and defend the Constitution. It may even be worth having people know where I was born. I'm thinking about changing my phonebook listing.

The Honorable Professor John Shelton Reed, Ph.D., is from Kingsport, Tennessee.

LIBERAL ARTS

POLITICAL PARTY-ING

Free elections in Russia have spawned some interesting political parties. Take, for instance, the new Party of Love, led by sex symbol Yelena Kondulainen. This blonde, 30-something actress who "shocked the communist authorities by baring all in the last, prudish days of the Soviet Union" is now tempting voters with a "back to basics" platform of law and order, public morality, and family values, reported the *European* last June. The Party of Love, whose slogan is "Lovers of the World, Unite," aims to "create a harmony of people and their environment, because . . . the more people love each other, the less hate there is around," in the words of Kondulainen.

Another fringe group vying for votes is the Beer-Lovers' Party, whose platform rests on the principle: "Put down your weapons and let's have a beer." The party line is that Russians are tired of vodka and just want the freedom to go to a pub and have a beer. The Beer-Lovers' foremost domestic policy is to abolish the import tax on the drink so that everyone can toast a new, intoxicated Russia.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Hire Education

by Mary Pride

Technology as Reform

Higher education has become hire education. That is the message of a series of recent books by Richard Mitchell, Charles Sykes, Thomas Sowell, Roger Kimball, Dinesh D'Souza, and Richard Huber. All of these writers would like to see academia reformed. Their proposals range from abolishing tenure (D'Souza and Sowell) to abolishing racial quotas (D'Souza and Sowell), to requiring professors to teach (Sykes), to restoring the curriculum (almost everyone), to abolishing schools of education (Mitchell), to cutting professors' salaries (Sykes and Huber), to publishing guides to the universities so parents and students can make better choices (Sowell and Sykes).

While all of these suggested reforms have merit, the reformers have been unable to come up with any mechanism to implement them. Today's students, already ill-taught through the first 13 grades, are not howling for better quality university education. A majority of the younger students are in college to party, not to study, and would be more likely to oppose reforms than to promote them. Their parents also seem clueless, by and large, to the parlous state of the universities. Even homeschooling parents, who have awakened to the problems in the K-12 educational establishment, plan to send their children to college without worrying too much about what is going on there. In a last-ditch attempt to find some group with the will to reform academia, Sykes presents us with a vision of trustees and legislators storming the gates of academe to demand changes. Short of a major miracle, this will not happen. Trustees are trustees and legislators are legislators because they have learned the art of not rocking the boats that matter. But thanks to high technology, the reformers may get their way after all.

Universities and colleges are able to charge world-class prices for incompetent, corrupt, and absent professors teaching Mickey Mouse courses and are able to force students to submit to nonacademic brainwashing sessions and other infringements on liberty because (a) they have a monopoly as the sole dispensers of degrees and (b) businesses require university degrees as credentials for almost any decent job.

This bottleneck could be eliminated if businesses no longer found American college degrees credible. It could also be eliminated by eliminating degrees altogether. Finally, we could get around the bottleneck if numerous new, affordable degree-granting organizations sprang up to compete with the old, defiled temples of academe. Until now, all three possibilities have been unthinkable. Entire generations have been sold on the idea that the more education you had, the more income you would make. And starting a campus-based institution capable of competing with other campus-based institutions requires an investment of tens, if not hundreds, of millions of dollars.

Until now.

Lewis J. Perelman's *School's Out: Hyperlearning, the New Technology, and the End of Education* (1992) sent shock waves through the academic world. First, Perelman pointed out that there is no longer a positive correlation between years of education and total lifetime income. After you spend $100,000 on your college degree, you may never even make it back, let alone with interest. Second, Perelman proclaimed schools were obsolete. *All* schools, from kindergarten through post-graduate facilities. Why? Because with affordable new technology, there is no longer any need for campus-based institutions. In fact, tomorrow's campus-based institutions may find themselves in the strange position of trying to vend an inferior product when better, far less expensive ones are also easier to obtain.

Not everything in Perelman's book is worthwhile. For one thing, he believes in better learning through yet-to-be-developed brain-enhancing drugs. Perelman also assumes that all education operates by imparting skills and knowledge—both of which can be done by computers—and ignores the part of education that involves imparting wisdom—which requires a human mentor. These oddities aside, his book is technologically right on. Everything he wrote about two years ago is here or is almost here:

* A small entrepreneurial company offers taped lectures of award-winning university professors. Although these "SuperStar Teachers" courses do not take full advantage of the technology—they are mainly "talking head" lectures with few or no visual aids—and are not even world-class teaching, they have generated a tremendous amount of interest. At present, the lectures are being purchased mainly by adults who want to refresh some material they took in college or pick up a course they missed, but there is no reason (other than the unavailability of university credits) why this kind of video course couldn't take the place of many on-site courses.

* Several universities, such as the University of Phoenix, now offer entire degree programs through online courses and assignments. Students interact with professors and other students via

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their computer keyboards.

* Many businesses are now offering "distance learning" programs to their employees. One such program provider, National Technological University in Colorado, issues more continuing education and advanced engineering degrees than any other American institution.

* The need to retrain for new careers, or keep current with new technology, is leading increasing numbers of adults to some form of distance learning.

* Online communications are becoming easier to master. You can plug in a modem, install America Online software, and be reading e-mail messages, joining online forums, and downloading information, all within a few minutes. The graphically oriented interface makes finding your way around the online service merely a matter of double-clicking on the right labeled pictures.

We are poised on the edge of a flood of training material, much of which will be superior to the typical lecture-to-hundreds graded-by-foreign-grad-student fare cranked out by today's universities. What homeschooling has done for K-12 resources, the new technology will do for college and post-graduate resources.

As the author of a homeschooling resource book, I was able a few years ago to review single-handedly virtually every product available. Today, as the publisher of a homeschooling magazine, I have a dozen reviewers and am still hard-pressed to keep up with it all. That's what will happen in higher education. Mountains of software. Stacks of video tapes. Thousands of local seminars (traveling professors). Tens of thousands of online courses.

Think it over—when you can put the entire contents of hundreds of the greatest books in the Western world on a single CD-ROM, who needs university libraries? Especially when the CD-ROM comes with a search engine that allows you to find everything Aristotle ever wrote on the subject of liberty, compare it to everything Tom Paine had to say on the same subject, and dump the quotations you select straight into your word processor. (That product is here, by the way. It's called the *Library of the Future* and costs between $49 and $495, depending on the edition.)

When you can turn on your VCR and watch your pick of the best teachers, who needs to settle for Philosophy 101 at the community college? When you can interact with classmates from around the world, how much more multicultural can education get?

The only thing holding back this flood of educational material is a thin piece of parchment. If you could get college credits as easily for reading your way through the *Library of the Future* as for taking "From Hemingway to Mailer: A Survey," fewer people would be willing to pay the exorbitant price, in time and money, of an on-site degree. Even better, if degrees no longer existed, students could simply offer employers a transcript (or portfolio) of work completed, from whatever institution.

If the content of high-tech learning stinks, who cares if it sings and dances? On the other hand, much of current higher learning stinks, and it doesn't even sing and dance. Plenty of opportunity here for those with something to teach and a willingness to get a keyboard or video-editing console under their fingers. As Dr. Ray Steele, a board member of the U.S. Distance Learning Association and director of Ball State University's Center for Information and Communication Science, says, "A world of broadband on demand is just around the corner," and it doesn't require a huge campus and multimillion-dollar faculty to jump in.

The higher education monopoly is on its way out, folks. If you are the president of a college with a nice campus but bad courses, look out. Get a clue from Dr. Murray Turoff, coauthor of *Learning Networks* (M.I.T. Press, 1994) and professor of computer science at New Jersey Institute of Technology. He points out, "What this technology does is break down all the prior geographical monopolies. So the ones who are really going to be in trouble are the local colleges that

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Landing

by Gloria Whelan

No sooner are we wingless earthlings closed
into the miracle of tool-kit flight
when looking out we see a cross composed
upon the clouds: the shadow of the plane
is waiting just ahead.

Our life out of our hands and traveling where
in childhood's upward faith we housed our God
last things are in our head. Hived off our sphere
we castaways thick packed within our pod
are each a solitaire.

We sooth ourselves with thoughts of some far street
that leads to castles rich and lands sublime,
a country rare: a Buru or Tibet.
Yet even as we dream we near the time
when plane and shadow meet.

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don't offer their money's worth—because people are going to have a choice."

We're not talking Tomorrowland, either. Ask Don Foshee. He's the newly elected president of the USDLA and also the director of distance learning at V-Tel Corporation. (They make videoconferencing equipment for educators, and more of it than anyone else.) Foshee says, "It's not a matter of whether it is going to change—it is already happening. Look at Oregon, which logged over 8,000 hours of live interactive courses last year, most of these in higher ed and community colleges. This is not exactly an experimental level of activity."

Foshee, who is by no means an enemy of big business and big government, thinks technology is poised to alter the landscape of higher education. "I don't mean to imply that those turf and territory issues don't exist," he says. "They're still very strong. But I believe from a practical standpoint that most of these traditional thinkers are being forced into a more free market."

Will degrees disappear? Dr. James Whitcarver, assistant director of the Computerized Conferencing and Communications Center at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, thinks so: "With opportunities to be educated becoming more ubiquitous, degrees will be less meaningful." Others disagree. They see universities slam-dunking new technology into existing courses, and even adding distance learning, without affecting accreditation and degrees.

Certainly, that is what universities would prefer. But the new technology is a large genie that is not easy to cram into a small bottle. It has an energy of its own. Once it is physically possible to take actual courses—complete with video-conferenced class discussions, interactively graded tests, and online access to huge libraries (with more available as close as your CD-ROM drive)—will John and Judy Student consent to take two-thirds of their courses from the same institution? Will they put up with the miserable fare of Women's Studies, Marxist history, literary deconstruction, ethnic diversity training, and all the rest of the hodgepodge currently forced on them at the point of a piece of parchment? Will not even those who attend campus-based institutions prefer to fill in with the courses of their choice, at their convenience, rather than endure the courses of the university's choice, scheduled so ineptly that the average "four-year" degree now takes six years? Won't businesses have a huge incentive to keep their people at work *while* those same people further their education—and will business owners want to pay for "Feminist Rage 101"?

As Dr. George Connick, president of the University of Maine at Augusta, points out, "If you look at the 15 million credit students in this country, the great bulk of them do not fit the traditional model. They are not young, they are not residential and they are not full-time." This vast horde of hardworking educational consumers will not be impressed with the same intellectual pabulum that wows the 18-year-old set.

Will adding high tech to higher education mean the death of teaching? Hardly. As Bill Garner, a distance learning expert at the University of San Francisco, says, "Learning (as in 'distance learning') and education are fundamentally personal and social in nature, not technical. People are far more important than bandwidth, gigabytes, and so on." Add a few of the right people, mix in some gigabytes of audiovisual data and some direct-dial access, and who knows? We might be able to fire the hirelings after all.

Mary Pride is the author of Schoolproof *and* The Big Book of Home Learning *series, the coauthor of* Prides' Guide to Educational Software, *and the publisher of* Practical Homeschooling *magazine.*

The Perils of Politically Incorrect Research

by John Dombrowski

In March 1969, at 32 years of age, I was by far the youngest of the ten chairmen of Foreign Area Studies at American University—and certainly the one with the least impressive credentials. Among my colleagues were not only well-known scholars, but former advisors to Presidents, reputable writers, a man who had launched a program that resulted in the surrender of tens of thousands of Chinese soldiers during the Korean War, and former members of the military staffs of Eisenhower, MacArthur, and Patton. Integrity was the dominant trait among us. But within about a 20-month period (1968-1970) there was a massive hemorrhage of talent from our 90-person organization, which had for years developed a reputation for producing some of the most accurate books in the English language about many non-European countries.

As far as I could determine, the trouble began when the Saudi Arabian government found out that a Washington-financed Area Handbook had described the slave markets, which were still a regular occurrence in the small towns of that kingdom. The Saudis had, I was told, threatened to break off diplomatic relations, in spite of having been shown the foreword to the handbook, which stated that the views expressed were those of the authors and not of the United States government. This incident, it was explained to me, triggered the "sensitivity review process" that was responsible for massive deletions in subsequent handbooks.

Still worse was the uproar in the State Department, in early 1968, when the bureaucrats in Foggy Bottom got around to reading our *Area Handbook for Communist China*, of which I was one of six coauthors. Our description of Mao's methods and the condition of his people was contrary to the image our government was then trying to convey, in order to bring about the normalization in diplomatic relations that was our government's secret goal. As a result, President Lyndon Johnson was prevailed upon to sign a directive stipulating that from that time on all government-financed foreign research would have to be forwarded to the relevant State Department desk officer in early draft form. This was not for the purposes of censorship, we were assured. The director of Foreign Area Studies was thrown out with only five days' notice.

Even more drastic was the fallout from the early 1960's Cuba handbook. As a result of the October 1962 missile crisis, there were insistent questions about how the United States had come to the brink of nuclear devastation. Unfortunately for Clifford Barnett and his conscientious team of research writers, the Cuba handbook spelled out all too clearly that as far back as 1947 Fidel Castro had been a participant in the Cayo Confites expedition to overthrow the government of the Dominican Republic. This had been under the direction of Pepe Figueres'

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"Caribbean Legion." Both the man and the organization were later acknowledged to have been under CIA control. Other information in the handbook made it clear that in the 1950's Castro had received both financing and favorable publicity from the United States, as well as conceptual and organizational help. Washington's response was to retrieve all the copies of the Cuba handbook that had already been sent out to numerous university libraries and to order them pulped. Even the President of the United States would not be able to get ahold of a book that "didn't exist."

I had just completed the supervision and editing of the *Area Handbook for Guatemala* and was proceeding with Costa Rica when I found out that my next job would be to produce a sanitized version of the Cuba handbook. After learning about the full-scale "disinformation" effort in progress—to insert false information into the handbook chapters after they had left the author's hand—I handed in my resignation, with a multi-page letter (which went to the President of American University) explaining why so many of the very best people were leaving. He had previously been clued-in to the situation and had tried to stiffen our resolve to resist the pressures we were under. He told our assembled organization, "Doctors hide their mistakes, undertakers bury them, but your shame is there for all the world to see." After some unpleasant encounters with at least three agencies of Big Brother as a magazine editor, I left the country with my family for nine years.

In 1991, after working for nine years as a government documents specialist at Wake Forest University, I returned to Washington at the invitation of a friend who had been familiar with both my work and the problems I had encountered during my last sojourn there in the 1960's. He wanted me to put into readable form the information his organization had collected through psychological tests administered to both American and Chinese (Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland) college students. His first choice for the position, Dr. Francis Hsu, a renowned expert on the differences in Chinese and American thought processes, had declined for reasons of frail health and advanced age.

Among the more interesting results of the study comparing Chinese and American thought patterns was the conclusion that Chinese Mainland students do not consider Marxism relevant to economic questions but do consider communism a faith. On the other hand, they do not consider Confucius or Confucianism to belong to the realm of religion. The main focus of their lives is their family, and they all but worship their mother. There is no tolerance for misbehavior in children past the age of five, and selflessness is the norm. Pornography, and behavior related to it, is contemptuously dismissed as spiritual pollution. Women may legitimately use their charms and sex appeal in only two contexts: relations in, or leading up to, marriage and prostitution. Partly for this reason, women in the professions find easy acceptance strictly on their professional competence. Not only parents, but also professors, university administrators, employers, and others in positions of authority over unmarried persons in their 20's consider it a solemn obligation to safeguard the sexual morality of their charges. Misconduct by either gender can result in the destruction of careers. There is serious concern at all levels of society that Western influences are undermining the moral fiber of Chinese youth. Marriage is the almost universal goal of all young people, and wedding-night virginity is expected. Schoolwork is a serious focus for urban young people who have the opportunity to study. Western-style dating is taboo because it would be a distraction for secondary-school students.

American college students contrasted sharply with the Chinese in virtually all of the above areas. The study showed that "health, sex, and sports" are the major focus of education for American students. Hedonism and self-indulgence are prominent. College conjures up "sports, football, fraternities, and parties" more than anything else. The word "classroom" did not even appear among American free-association responses to the stimulus-word "college."

In great contrast to the Mainland Chinese, a significant minority of American college students had very ambivalent feelings toward their mothers. The word "mother" evoked responses such as "f--ker," "strange," "abusive," "bossy," and "pushy." The students resented their mothers' tendency to nag, fight, inflict pain, and instill fear. Of the four groups studied (students in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States), Americans were the least inclined to consider their mothers as gentle and kind. While Mainland Chinese indicated a respect verging on awe and reverence toward their fathers, Americans indicated no strong feelings, either positive or negative—with alcoholism and divorce being the major complaints against them.

Although I had been given very strong assurances that I would be independent and free from pressure in reaching my conclusions, the reality turned out otherwise. Since I was not amenable to modifying my sources and conclusions, I found that my job had been terminated in June 1992. I was offered renewal of my position on the condition that I write what I was told to write. My response that this would be prostitution was regarded as incomprehensible.

The Department of Education, the formal sponsor of the study, informed me that it had been given the names of all the persons who had worked on it and that mine was not among them. In fact, the study came out under the authorship of Dr. Hsu, who, as far as I could determine, had not even seen it. I am told that the new, anonymously modified version of the study bears virtually no resemblance to the work I left at my departure. No doubt it will be politically correct—and very pleasing to those who ordered it. It will also bear very little resemblance to the research on which it is supposed to be based.

John Dombrowski writes from Rockville, Maryland.

New Covenant High School, 2040

by Robert Westmoreland

New Covenant High Dialoguing instructist Harold Schroeder-Dewey VCRed a Shakespeare Video Classics tape from yoredays—Alan Alda as a nonconfrontational Lear—for his/her class and egressed to interface with Resource Person Vita Burning-Bed, who was cogdissonancing over the fact that the Release Room was processing 27 percent more of the student anthropopulace this fall than last.

The Jocelyn Elders Release Room instances indirect lighting, cots with strategic oil cans to minimize squeaks,

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condoms, and highly olfactored disinfectant. The rainforest green cinderblock walls rank high on the pacificity index, as do the subliminal CDed dolphin sounds. The Release Room ensued when New Covenant football games were increasingly violenced from the stands. This uptick was a surprise in itself, for at this timepoint football nonhierarchies and conciliates. The testosteroned angularity of the gridiron segued multiple temporal units ago to a mammorial, inclusive series of concentric circles that accommodates diverse playing styles: some teams opt to traverse spacetime toward the outmost circle and "score" ("The Tepid Horde of New Covenant High/Will access the scoring area by and by"); others eject the team concept altogether and complement their opposers in a yin-yang configuration. The school colors have transitted from stark blue and white to a more ambiguous mauve and eggshell.

Yet knives, handguns, maces, and handheld cruise and smart weapons increasingly frequent games, impacting player and fan morale toward the downside. The Release Room was targeted to dissipate the psycho-sexual tension that advents damage-oriented behaviors and football gridlock. Was the Release Room malapproximating its rationale?

"The Release Room could access its goal if Dialoguing and Tactiling standards hadn't been highed," worded Schroeder-Dewey. *Dialoguing* and Tactiling are branchouts of the Communications Stream. Dialoguing, known up until about four deca-units ago as English, is dispensed in seven languages, and umbrellas an Oral and a Written cluster. The Cognitive Patterns Inventory factors out which students attune more authentically to oral or written stimuli, and which to vary-textured surfaces.

Burning-Bed backworded that standards are necessary. "Standards are a net plus, but not when they expense peace," verbed Schroeder-Dewey. "Dialoguing is a bilateral process in a multilateral world. It separates, exclusions, one-on-ones. The chickens were bound to home in and roost. What *expected* you?"

"We should able each student to communicate with every other without timelapse," he/she continuitied, "or input the thoughts of all to a Meaning Trough, to be accessed by modem. If the new neuro-fiber-optic technology can't do that, it nonfunctions."

"But couldn't the Release Room itself partly aspect the problem?" quizzed Burning-Bed, contemporaneously awaring that his/hers was only one perspective among multies. "Maybe students anxietize about reproduction as a possible fall-out of Release Room activity. Maybe that root-causes violenting."

Schroeder-Dewey vocabbed nonsense to that. "A student can access a term limit (the Neovocab abortion verb sign) by laser, along with the mandatory Reproductive Strategies Debriefing, and still vacate only 15 minutes of lunch, maximal."

Pointwise, he/she'd accessed something. But the resource person was impuzzled that lately Tactiler violenting had increased even more than Dialoguer violenting. Schroeder-Dewey verbed that Tactiling standards were highed fewer timepoints ago. Tactilers are mandatoried to identify everything from Rough to Smooth to eligibilize for graduation, which emphatics analytic and convergent thinking, prioritizing separation and classification at the expense of synthesis and holism, thus deep-sixing solidarity. Schroeder-Dewey admiringly referenced the bovininity of students on the Being Track. The Being Track nonequates with the Doing Track, the latternost of which comprises Dialoguing, Tactiling, Numeracy, and the rest of the traditioned curriculum. BT students have exited the "plan," "act," and "think" modes and quantumleaped from one absolutely discrete point in spacetime to the next.

BT enrollment has expansioned greatly since the Substance Dispensary premiered at New Covenant, which ironizes, because the implementation of the dispensary at first divisioned the anthropopulace. Units and units ago the pre-millennial President initially againsted the legalling of substances, much less student-accessing them in schools. But he/she logicked out his/her position on term limits and condoms, and cerebrummed that some students would intake substances, legalled or not. (The idea was first vetted on the *Donahue-Pozner-Horton Show*.) Shouldn't they recept substances minus potentially deathdoing additives and intake them in a facility overpar, cleanness- and well-lightedness-wise? Chief Justice Moseley-Braun vocalled at his/her weekly press conference that if anything emanated from the penumbra of the Constitution, it was the substance-ingestation right. "What you do with your body is between you and your god," he/she outspoke in a rememberable verbchain. New Covenant's dispensary was booted and loaded only brief timelapses ago.

Burning-Bed termed that "the problem is we're piecemealing. Not just resource persons and other facilitators, but everybody up to the Department of Justice and Wellness (just transitioned to the Reno Careplex). We need a more systemic, holistic approach. In particular, more school homing. The more we hillary, the less they'll violent."

Hillarying, or school homing, was inspirationed by the Premier Significant Other who synapsed that schools should overtake functionwise the family when it nonviabled its basic tasks—nutritioning, garbing, residencing, and multi-acculturating junior citizens. PremSigOth synthesized Everybody is Somebody, the educative component of the comprehensive Social Cuisinart ideocluster. Under EvSome, every private school voluntarily had to access vouchers to each public school student in its district, else run roughsled over substantive due process and get consent-decreed. EvSome, which prioritized people, was a tough sell on Anita Hill; the PremSigOth and PreMilPrez were Gored (similars being Borked, except the Goree's scriptations are taken *in* context), but in the end-result victored.

"You're right, we need to hillary, not piecemeal; you can't band-aid a root cause," said Schroeder-Dewey. Just then something commotioned. "What the . . ." he/she self-said. It couldn't be sourced in the Release Room, which was soundproofed. He/she mega-ambled to his/her classcubicle, almost dysfunctioning the turnstile on the bible detector in transit. A student who'd just effected reentry from the dispensary was bowel-evacuating on the VCR. "These aren't valid Tepid Horde behaviors. Whatever occurred to love of infrastructure?" ejaculated Schroeder-Dewey as he/she accessed him/her by the nose ring and progressed him/her to the Release Room. Plummeting self-esteem- and empowerment-wise, he/she multidecibelled the paleoverbsign for reproductive ingress and egress and said something about *Miranda*.

Robert Westmoreland is a professor of philosophy and religion at the University of Mississippi.

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The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

View From a Campfire

"Been up the Hams Fork yet?"

"I took a drive there last weekend."

"How far did you get?"

"Almost to the guard station. There's a hellacious mudhole just south of it."

"How about Fontenelle?"

"I ain't tried it myself, but they say it's dry to the Forest boundary. There's two foot of snow yet past the cattle guard."

Winter recedes inch by slow inch from the high country at first, gains momentum as it loses its hold, and is gone suddenly—almost overnight, it seems—leaving the aspen stands a fragile green among the black-green of the pine forests. As the glaring snowbanks retreat higher, the elk move up from their winter feeding grounds on the sagebrush flats and calve in secluded parks covered by arrowroot balsam unfolding yellow blooms above their fleshy green leaves, bluebells, flox, and Indian paintbrush. The passing of winter uncovers Wyoming and reopens it, revealing a complex backroad system of which the state highways are only a minor extension. For several weeks after the snow goes the bentonite roads are ribbons of purple mud, mostly impassable even with tire chains and four-wheel drive, but the strong spring winds and the climbing sun leach the moisture from them until they are pale and hard like old china. When the Aussie circuit-riders are busy shearing sheep by day and pinching the girls in the bars downtown at night, and entire ranch families from age eight to 80 are bloody from the docking pens, it is time to vaccinate and shoe the horses, haul out the gear stowed after hunting season last fall, and peruse stacks of topographic maps in preparation for harassing the backpackers, granolas, and earth muffins in the mountains once again.

But first a matter of protocol, ritual, habit . . . love, actually. Cutting west to east across the Tavaputs Plateau in northeastern Utah, south of the Uinta Mountains and north of the Book Cliffs, an enchanted fissure called Nine Mile Canyon stretches, debouching into the Green River directly above Desolation Canyon, so named by John Wesley Powell on his first exploratory trip down the Green and Colorado rivers in 1869. One hundred twelve years later, my then wife and I discovered Nine Mile for ourselves by accident while trying to find jeep access to the Green, and since 1981 I have visited the canyon each spring save one or two, as well as several times in midsummer. By April the plateau is dried by sun and wind, but the steep six-mile descent by switchback from the north rim to the creek bottom is often impassable until May, and in really wet years Nine Mile Creek floods the road that travels beside and above it. At Memorial Day the cottonwoods are in leaf to form shady glades swarming with scarlet-and-black alder beetles, the sun is already hot, and thunderstorms develop most afternoons, drawing a blanket of gray cloud over the main canyon and its laterals. There are still a few working ranches in the bottom; several times we have shared our camp with bawling whiteface cattle, and once we were nearly overrun in a rainstorm by men in yellow slickers on horseback attempting to regather their animals.

Because I have discovered that ex-wives make excellent camping partners, I phoned mine again this year and together we made the 250-mile trip from Kemmerer to Nine Mile where, plunging into the gorge from the north rim at seven in the evening, we followed the creek downstream for several miles before crossing and turning up Dry Cottonwood Canyon, past the startling Anasazi drawings on the blackened rock face to the switchbacks at the canyon head, which deposited us at Peter's Point on the south rim a little before dusk. It was my first trip to Nine Mile in two years, Norma's in three, but *of course* nothing had changed. There are very few happy places in this world about which you can say that after two whole years—let alone 13—nothing has changed. Even the rusty lines gathering natural gas from a series of wells drilled in the 1960's looked the same, and one of them had ruptured. The kind of progress we like to see.

A quarter of an hour later we had the truck off-loaded, the tent up, the fire ring built, and the dead wood gathered and were perched on the outermost ledge of rain-pitted sandstone rock with a magnum of red wine between us, surveying the immense and infinitely reticulated canyon beneath our feet, the tawny plateau beyond, and, 70 or 80 miles away on the northern horizon, the 90-mile sweep of the Uintas—the same range that is visible to the south another 70 miles from my home in Kemmerer. It isn't easy to shake a real landmark, out West. Huge red and black ants crawled everywhere, snapping their jaws, and jays jinked 50 feet below the canyon rim, exhibiting a streak of white along each wing and two parallel ones down the lower tail and body. The far cliffs merged from beige to gray toward the canyon's purple heart; turrets of eroded red rock stood like chimneys from the steep pulverizing walls; the flat green table lands spread to the ends of the promontories below. Sunlight glowed in the ends of the pine needles; a black juniper snag clawed the clean colors of the sunset; and a pair of planets burned in the track of the final sun. Ah, wilderness! Oh, summertime.

I arrived home from Utah to learn the appalling news. For as much as two months—the better part of the short Wyoming summer—I must share my favorite (and, as I have come to regard it, private) mountain range with 12,000 to 15,000 members of the Rainbow Family of Living Light: middle-aged hippies from all around the United States and abroad who have chosen to hold their annual rendezvous and pow-wow in Snider Basin, a bare 60 or so miles due north of Kemmerer in Sublette County and directly athwart my favored route of travel up South Piney Creek behind Mt. Darby to Cheese Pass and thence to Wyoming Peak, the highest point (11,374 feet) in the Wyoming Range. The week before, a topless woman had appeared at sup-

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pertime in the café adjacent to the Texaco station in Cokeville, terrifying the cowboys and oil field roughnecks out of a year's growth and their half-eaten suppers before she was escorted away by the local constabulary. ("I hear you had a topless young lady in the Texaco," a resident later remarked to the police chief, who replied in a disgusted tone, "It wasn't any *young* lady.") When it snowed three inches last week, the Rainbows bought up every blanket and article of warm clothing to be had in Kemmerer and Big Piney. Although most of the residents of the area seem amused rather than outraged, there has been dark talk in the bars at night, and local pickup trucks with guns across the back windows wander north in the direction of Snider Basin. If the entire complement of 30,000 Rainbows should show up, they would comprise Wyoming's third largest city, however temporary. In Kemmerer, the municipal police are rumored to meet almost daily, and the county hospital is on full alert; tens of thousands of condoms are being shipped by altruists to Snider Basin. Here apparently is what the feds have in mind when they talk of range reform. Kick the 29,000 grazing leaseholders off the public lands and replace them with 30,000 fornicating hippies.

Fortunately there are plenty of trails, most of them negotiable by horse, into the Wyoming Range, which includes an immensity of ruggedly spectacular wilderness. Following a winter of normal snowpack, horse travel is problematical until around the Fourth of July owing to vast drifts of rotting snow through the black timber, dangerous snow cornices above timber line, roaring swollen creeks, and trails slippery with mud. But the winter of '93-'94, like the eight previous ones except for that of '92-'93 (a "normal" winter that was experienced by the human and animal populations of Wyoming as a sort of frozen Deluge in the context of ongoing drought), was painfully dry, making access to the highest parks with their desiccated soils, sparse grasses, and muted floral display possible by early June.

Leaving the pickup and trailer in La Barge Meadows, the headwaters of three mountain creeks or small rivers, I rode up Little Corral Creek, crossed over the saddle, and followed Poker Creek down to Lake Alice, a long, narrow body filling a fissure produced by an earthquake in the early part of this century and named for a young girl who drowned in it in the 20's. I camped on the lakeshore overnight and in the morning proceeded along the terrible trail, where the horse nearly rolled over me as I led him, up Alice Creek and onto a high ridge 1,000 feet or more above Coantag Creek, which I followed in a sweeping curve north to Mt. Isabel. Ascending the opposite ridge on its western aspect through the twilight shadow of a pine forest, we started a herd of elk that broke, more heard than seen, over the summit where the late afternoon sky showed through the trees and where, following more sedately, we rode straight into the astounded elk who, having arrived in the open park on the south slope, had stopped to crop the forbs that grow there. They were so close that by leaning from the saddle I could have touched one or two of them with my riding bat, and after a long, petrified stare they wheeled, fled almost as one animal into a draw, and vanished. It was growing late, the trail had long since been erased by the elements, and I rode for the next several minutes with my face in a map, searching for a way across to Commissary Ridge and growing slowly aware of a sound which I took for the cry of a circling hawk until, turning as we rode across the lengthening shadows of the spired firs, I saw that we were being followed by two calf elk. Left behind by the running herd, they had sensibly attached themselves to the largest quadruped in sight. One was slightly larger than the other, but both were still in spots. Of course they could not have seen a horse or a human being before; living so deep in the range where even hunters rarely venture, the herd itself was probably as innocent as its young. For ten minutes they circled the horse, pawing the ground and tossing their heads, while Saab Star pranced and pawed in response. I managed to unfasten the pack attached to the saddle behind me and remove the cheap camera I carry on trips into the mountains, but it wouldn't work. At last the larger calf ran off a hundred yards and lay down under a tree, while the smaller one simply folded her legs beneath her to rest. I dismounted carefully, walked over, and stood a few feet behind her as she watched me across her shoulder with moon-creature eyes. As I remounted and rode away, she was still watching.

From my camp on the brow of Commissary Ridge I looked up the Greys Creek Valley that separates the Wyoming and Salt River ranges, where Wyoming Peak rose in full view and, 90 miles distant, the horn of the Grand Teton appeared. By early June, the once-lovely town of Jackson is refilling with the beautiful people, as well as the not so beautiful: hard to say which I appreciate less. Not more than five miles distant by line of sight, the blunt southerly abutment of Mt. Darby frowned down upon Snider Basin and its thousands of hippie campers, dissenters from American society yet so utterly and hopelessly American in their desire to experience wilderness, like the tourists in the Yellowstone, as a mob. How is it that so many people who have turned their backs on America since the 1950's for its unloveliness are among those responsible for having made their country, to paraphrase Edmund Burke, so unlovely?

But seated here on a flat fragment of shale, rising now and again to dodge the fanning smoke of the small pinewood fire that heats my supper of beans and chile while I suckle a pint of Jim Beam; watching the night rise in a slow lavender sea over the edge of the golden plain to the east, the talus slopes glow red in the reflected glare of the setting sun, and the canyons and valleys fill with a light like some newly discovered substance, part water and part smoke, I find it hard to condemn these people for having "dropped out"—dropping out being, in the context of mass American society and the coming totalitarianism, a rational and even laudatory act. I myself, after all, am a dropout from that world far beyond the fading rim of the Green River Basin—the world of money, of power, and of politics; of careerism and the Great Game; of sycophancy and self-promotion; of imperial culture and the cultural imperialism of the modern megalopolis; of the effacement of God's creation by that of man; of growing terror and unreality. Dropping out is not the issue, it is where you land that matters. And here I am, seated beside a campfire eating beans and drinking whiskey, listening to my horse crop the little grass he can find, and watching the Milky Way form its gaseous belt diagonally across the sky. From an elevation of 10,000 feet, with no one to my knowledge within 30 trail miles of us, life on this first day of summer, June 21, 1994, looks good to me. "Here," Geoffrey Chaucer wrote, "is but wilderness." You can have the rest. ·c

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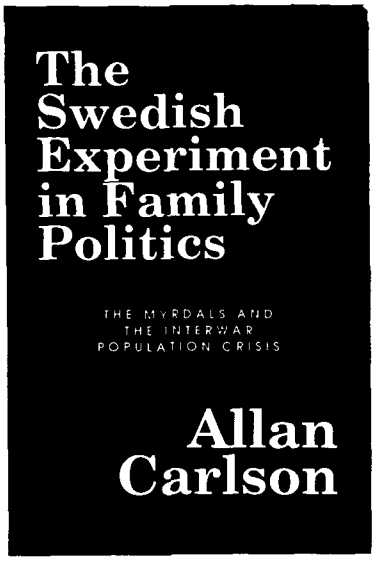

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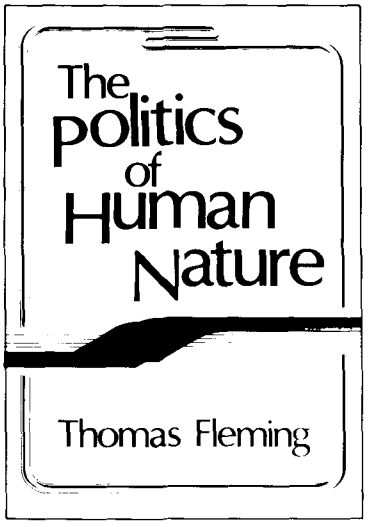

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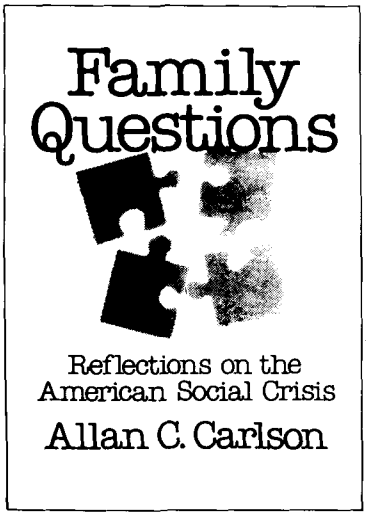

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